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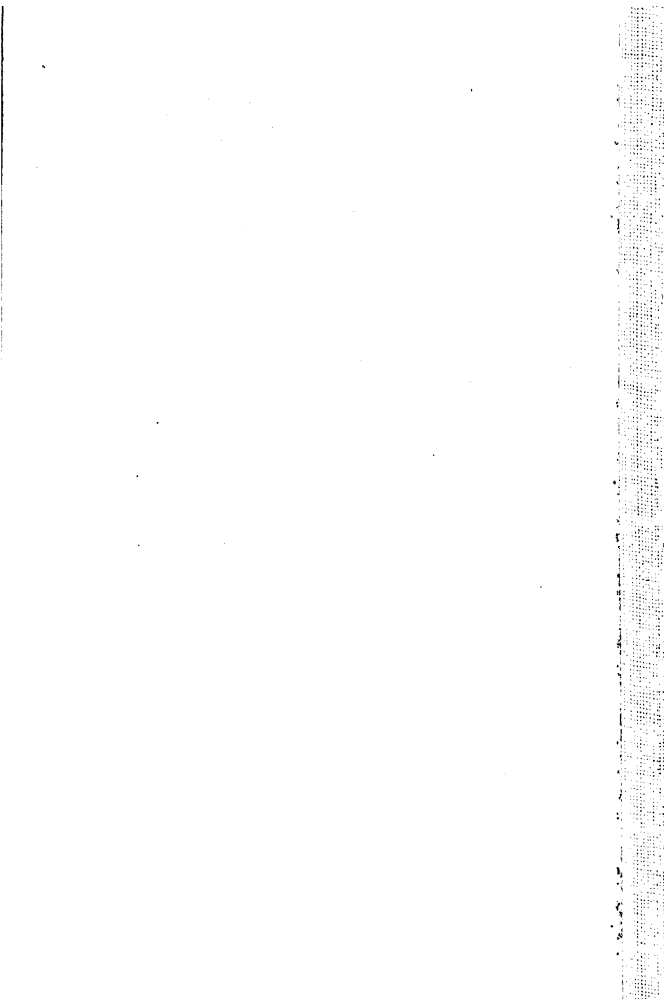
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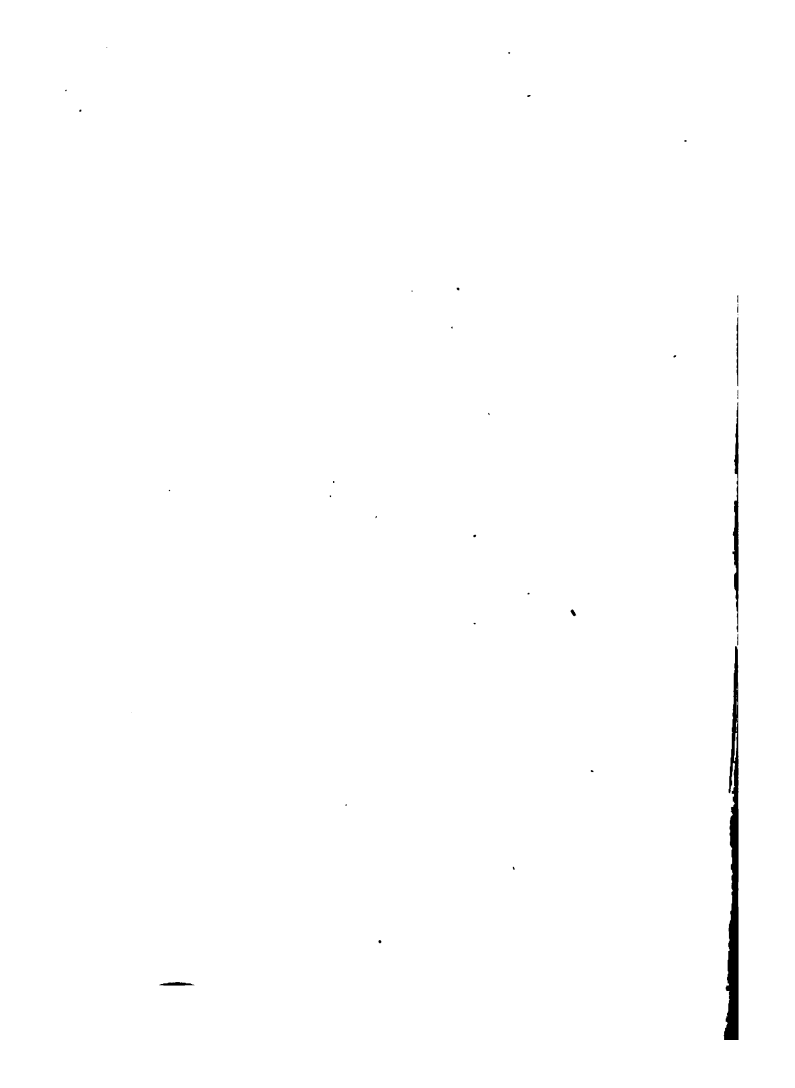
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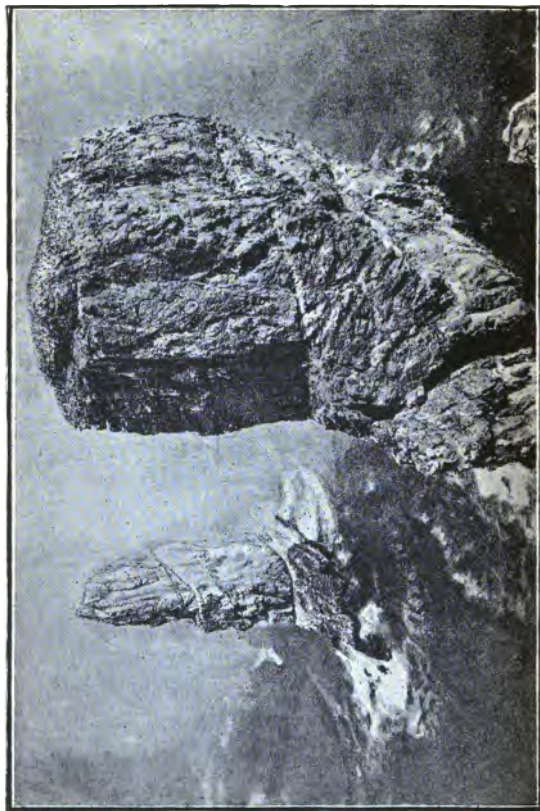
DAYS IN CLOVER.





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THE STACK ROCKS

DAYS IN CLOVER

BY

THE AMATEUR ANGLER

AUTHOR OF "DAYS IN DOVE DALE," "FRESH WOODS AND
PASTURES NEW," "FRANK'S RANCHER,"
ETC.

E. Marston

"O, Summer is sweet, and its sky is so blue—
The days are so long, and my heart is so light
When drifting about in my bass-wood canoe!
Where am I? no matter! It's nothing to you—
The breeze is so pleasant, the sun is so bright—
O, Summer is sweet, and the sky is so blue!"

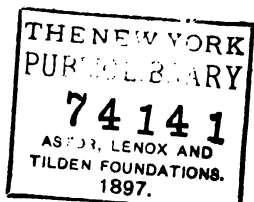
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LONDON
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St. Dunstan's House

FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1892




FISHING.

"And yet we all know how much romance—yes! and of the sweetest, most delicate, most exquisite romance—lies always round and about this art of fishing! A strange charm haunts the gentle craft. A touch of high and subtle pleasure there is in it in spite of its underlying guile. A fragrance of tenderness and of mild soothing peace sometimes hangs over it. It has been so for us since Mr. Izaak Walton sang its beatific praises, and made its home classical for all English ears and hearts. Izaak Walton . . . has made fishing the type of the gentle mind that finds, even in the midst of hot and angry tumults, a refuge for quiet hours, a haunt of peace by happy river sides."—
CANON SCOTT HOLLAND'S *Sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral, Sept. 11th, 1892.*

JOHN WATSON
J. WATSON
J. WATSON



PREFACE.

"AYS in Clover" represent to me the few days of the year when I can flee away and be at rest ; away from "the busy hum of men," away from the endless worrits and entanglements and

*"The hodge-podge of business and money and care,
And care and money and trouble,"*

(*12. Wa. 1st Edn.*)

away to the pleasant woods and fields, to mountains and streams, to "shaded mossy banks inlaid with flowers"; whether it be in spring, in summer, or autumn, or winter, these are the joyful times for me; these are the days I have tried to depict in these pages. I think I am justified in calling them, what they have always been to me, "days in clover." Most of these letters have appeared during the last two or three years in "*The Fishing Gazette*." I have ventured once again to tack these odds and ends together, and make a volume of them; it is but a booklet, and pretends to nothing more, and looks for no other reward than that it might convey, at least to some people, a portion

of the pleasure which the writer himself experienced in the scenes he has written about and tried to describe.


My "Clover-days" have been only partially devoted to angling, but my many failures in the angling art, and my only occasional successes, still justify my claim and explain my adherence to the title "Amateur Angler." Anglers who seek for valuable and solid information, hints, or theories on the gentle art of angling, will find them in abundance elsewhere ; they must not look for them here ; the "Amateur Angler" can teach them nothing.

E. M.



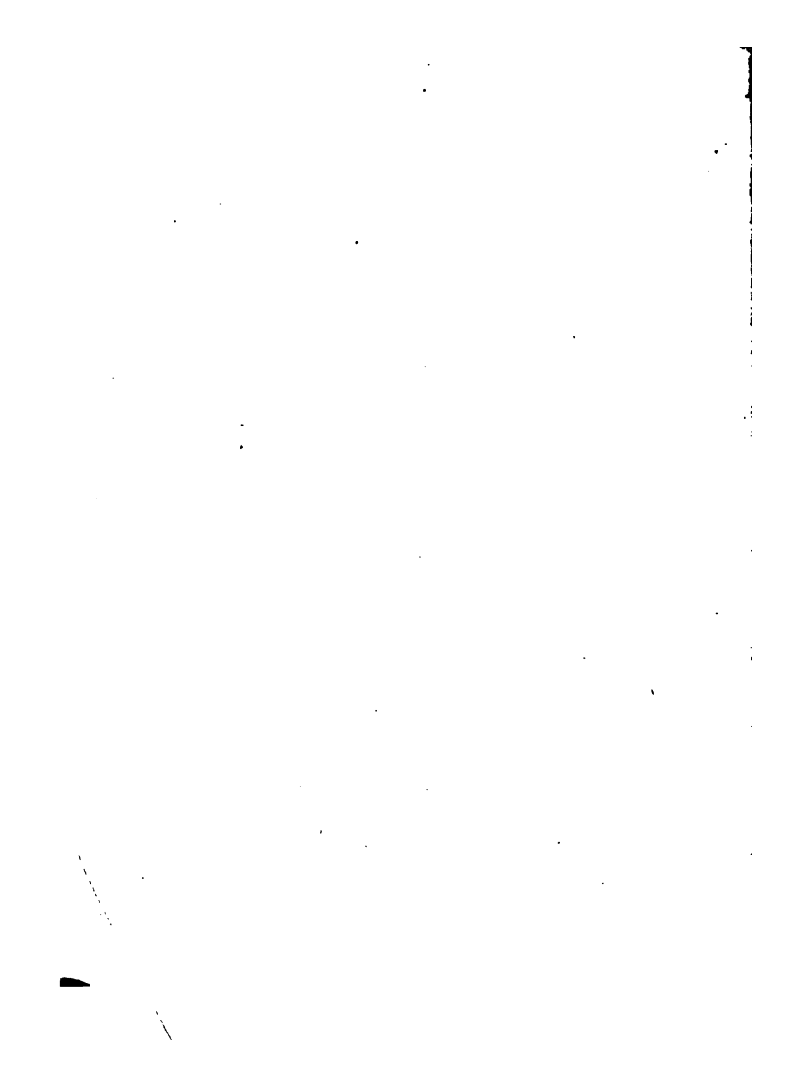


NOTE.

HEN I printed an edition of 250 copies of what it has become the custom to call "*An Edition de Luxe*" of this little book, I thought myself rash in making so large a venture. To my surprise, and naturally to my gratification, I found even before the volume was published, that America and this country combined, would have consumed very many more had I not pledged myself to this limit. As I have had numerous applications for a volume containing the illustrations, I have decided to reproduce them by a cheaper process, and to insert them in a smaller sized volume at a lower price, and in a style, which, while pleasing in itself will in no sense compare with the large paper edition. I am indebted to Mr. H. M. Allen of Tenby for permission to engrave "The Stack Rocks," and "The Hunter's Leap," and to Messrs. Frith of Reigate for "View of Tenby" and "Pembroke Castle." I have also to thank Mr. J. E. Arnett of Tenby for allowing me to reproduce "The Herring-Gulls' Nest," "Grassholme Island," and "Guillemots, Kittiewakes, and Razorbills on the Rocks."

E. M.

Oct. 29, 1892.





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DAYS IN CLOVER.

LETTER No. I.

THE HOLY WELL, FOLKESTONE.

"Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken strangé strondes
To servé halwes couthé in sundry landés,
And specially from every shiré's ende
Of Engelande to Canterbury they wende."

CHAUCER.

May, 1885.



FOLKESTONE, as everybody knows, is a delightful place in weather which will allow you to get about ; but when the wind blows half a gale all day and all night from every point of the compass, and sunshine and shower alternate every hour of the day (the wind being steady always in its strength and variableness), getting about is not so pleasant as it might otherwise be.

I soon get tired of the sight of the sea ; and although it is very pleasant to perambulate the beautiful " Lees,"

yet my eyes and my heart quickly turn my footsteps inland.

Climbing the hills gives me a healthy appetite. So now, spite of showers and spite of wind, I am off on a pilgrimage in search of "The Holy Well," hidden away, as I am told, somewhere up yonder, in a dell at the foot of "Sugar Loaf Hill." Sugar Loaf Hill is not far off, and the way across the fields by a substantial farmhouse is pleasant enough.

I climbed right up to the top of the hill—not a very hard thing to do—and then I found that it was really conical, separated from the surrounding hills by a semi-circular valley. Looking at it from the town, one takes the ridge at the back of it to be only the upper part of the "Sugar Loaf." From the top I descended the western side in search of "the Well." At the foot of the hill I made my way still westward towards a clump of trees and bushes nestling in a hollow of the adjoining hill. There, thought I, must surely be the spot; and following a rill of pure water, I came to the source, which I found oozing out of the rock in a little hollow under an ash tree, and surrounded by a few hawthorn and ivy-clad stumps; but there was no well visible—only the marks of cattle hoofs.

Thirty yards further on I found another source, from which a similar small stream issued, the two rivulets combining a few feet below the lowest.

"Can this be the 'Holy Well'?" said I; "if so, where are the signs? Did the monks of old leave no bit of ivy-clad wall of stone or brick to tell that they had once been here? Is this all that pilgrims from

Folkestone come forth into the wilderness to see?" I had had a delightful walk, however, so far, and the scenery of the hills was picturesque enough to please a more fastidious pedestrian than myself; but if this is the Well, it is rather a sell!

So now I took to birds'-nesting, not that I wanted to rob the little birds of their eggs, but only just to refresh the memory of juvenile days by looking at them. I followed the hedgerow that runs along at the foot of the Castle Hill, and looked out for birds' nests and new specimens of ornithology. I have heard of such rare birds as the golden oriole being seen about here, but I was not fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of one, and being a rare summer visitant, it was hardly to be expected that I should at so early a period. Indeed, I may say that although I followed this bushy hedgerow for more than a mile, I saw only three birds which I do not see every day in my own suburban garden; these were the yellow-hammer, cuckoo, and bullfinch, the latter a lovely specimen. With the yellow-hammer I had a pleasant five minutes; he sat on a sprig ten yards away, and together we sang his little song, rising the gamut from a low note to a high one, and then dropping suddenly to a low one; he sang and I whistled and he seemed quite disappointed when I no longer followed his lead. "A little bit o' bread and *no* cheese!" was the burden of his song.

As to birds' nests, though I searched diligently amongst the bushes, I found only the shattered remains of a blackbird's nest in a buckthorn and blackberry bush, so artfully placed that it was impossible to get at it without cutting the prickly thorns to pieces.

The bush was full of large stones ; it was clear that juvenile ornithologists had discovered that nest before me, and being unable to reach it without scratching their hands and tearing their clothes, they threw in these large stones and so destroyed it. I am an old man ; but I have still some lingering consciousness of a like destructive propensity in my boyish days, so I won't think too harshly of these urchins.

On returning home I told a townsman of my search for "The Holy Well," and my disappointment at the result, and then I learnt that after all I had not found it ; so next morning I made another pilgrimage, this time following the same route to the foot of "The Sugar Loaf." I ascended its eastern shoulder up to a point where I could see down the north side of the hill, and there, sure enough, was the Well—nestling at the foot of an amphitheatre formed by three hills, with an open look-out seaward to the south-west. I descended the hill, and found a small pond about thirty yards long by ten yards wide, the sides trampled in by cattle, the margin surrounded by flags, the middle overgrown with rushes, and the surface partly covered with leaves of the water-lily not yet in bloom, and the green slime of frogs. The water seemed to be the happy home of tadpoles.

At the lowest end the water trickled into a circular well, made of bricks, about five or six feet in diameter. This water was also covered over with green slime. At a lower level, and on the opposite side, the holy water trickled out of the Well again into a tinkling rivulet, and here, in the water, I found thousands of small black pilgrims, their heads towards the Well, and their

little tails wagging behind them. On the brick rim of the Well, which seemed to be of modern reconstruction, I found a halfpenny, left there by some previous pilgrim, doubtless, for the benefit of a poor brother, and, as such, I pocketed it. The holy water wends its way down an old course for about thirty yards, and then suddenly vanishes in an oozy swamp. The origin of this Well is doubtful. There is a broad green path winding down to it from the Canterbury road, evidently cut out of the sides of the steeply sloping hill. The Canterbury road passes over the shoulder of the "Sugar Loaf," and it is quite reasonable to picture bands of heated and wearied pilgrims, on their way to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket, turning from the main road, and wending their way down this broad and slanting, and now grassy, path, to refresh themselves and be blessed by this holy water.

It is a charming spot for a summer encampment ; but where could Canterbury pilgrims have come from to find themselves here ? They must have come from over the sea, under the pious inspiration of *Notre Dame de L'étoile de Boulogne*.

"The holy, blissful martyr for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke."

For although, as Chaucer tells us, they came "from every shire's end of Engelande," the foot of the Sugar Loaf Hill is surely about the last place where any English pilgrims need have found themselves.

The hills around, however, have all the appearance of rougher work than these devout pilgrims were likely to have bestowed on them ; they have evidently been

the scene of Roman or old Saxon encampments, and the origin of the Well in the hollow, or rather of the circular bricked formation, would thus be better explained.

When I had finished my inspection I scrambled up to the turnpike road ; I had observed from the top of the Castle Hill two pilgrims wending their way along the foot, evidently in search of holy water. They came to the first puddle-hole, and after inspecting it as I had done, they turned their weary footsteps homewards, thinking, no doubt, they had performed a pious act, and perhaps a little disappointed ; they had passed within a hundred yards of the real Well without seeing it !

Just as I reached the brow of the plateau, I saw at some distance a hare cantering along in a line straight towards me. I stood perfectly still, and he came up so near that I could have struck him with my umbrella ; but why should I ? I should have been delighted to shake a paw with him. I suppose in his blindness he mistook me for a tree or a four-legged animal ; but no sooner did he discover that I was only a two-legged one, than his gentle confidence was gone—he was off like a dart. Hares, I believe, cannot see straight before them.





LETTER No. II.

EASTER AT FOLKESTONE.

The Battle at Up Hill.

April, 1888.



SATURDAY, the last of wintry March, was a fine sunshiny day; just the kind of day for a country ramble: so I thought I would have another scramble over Sugar Loaf Hill, take another peep at St. Thomas's Holy Well nestling at the northern foot of it, run over Cæsar's Camp, take a round by Shorncliffe Camp, through Sandgate, and so home by the sea; but things did not turn out as I had planned. Passing Walton Farmhouse, and looking over to the hill on the north-east, I descried a solitary horseman in military garb galloping along the ridge; he was soon followed by another, and another. Then I saw, winding up the hillside, a number of military wagons and field-guns. I wondered what was the meaning of it. Pacific citizen that I am, I had never thought of Folkestone and Dover as the headquarters of the *Easter Manœuvres*, but the sight of these things aroused my military ardour. My con-

templated peaceful work was to be converted into one of adventure and peril. I had heard of battles, but I had never seen one. I longed to follow to the field our noble Volunteers. Our beloved country was being invaded by our ancient enemies, who had never before, since the Conqueror's days, found a hostile footing on our shores. I wondered, but yet I did not doubt, as to how our warlike Volunteers would behave themselves under the fire of an enemy who had already been so far successful as to effect a landing somewhere—probably between Dymchurch and Dungeness.

I followed the Canterbury road as far as the turnpike, and then ascended the hill on the right: on the top of that hill one gets a fine view of the surrounding country to the north, east, and west. It was a glorious sight on this bright March morning. Yonder hill, looking towards Dover, a bend northwards of the one on which I am standing, is surmounted by cavalry and heavy guns; below them, sloping down towards the valley, are many companies of red-coated infantry, mostly lying down behind old hedge-rows or bits of rising ground, or in old chalk-pits; the farmhouse at the bottom is also lined with them, looking in the distance like rows of potted geraniums in full bloom. Surrounded as I was by these red-coats, I thought I was in the midst of my countrymen, but I was soon undeceived.

A gun was fired from the opposite hill (looking towards Terlingham). This was evidently the signal for commencing the attack upon us. Presently all the hills in front of us, as far as we could see, swarmed with dark coats, and bloody war began. Firing from

cannon, from rifles, Gatling and Maxim guns, was incessant on both sides.

A touching sight it was to see a flock of sheep on the hill side facing us; close behind them, protected by the hedgerow, was a Maxim gun, pot-pot-pot-potting right through them; big guns firing over their heads, and rifles all round them. Poor things, how they scampered from one side of the field to the other, up and down, round and round, all the time keeping close together. It must have been an awful hour for them!

By this time I had discovered that I was within the enemies' lines, and fully expected every moment to be taken prisoner. There were many others besides myself who had innocently climbed up to this plateau to find themselves between two galling fires; but both sides had too much to do to take the least notice of us. They treated us as though we were trees or stones or sheep. They could not see us. Cannon balls went rushing over our heads. Maxims and Gatlings from both sides sent their whistling missiles through and through us. The soldiers were better off than we, for they lay flat on the ground, and only rose on one knee to fire straight at us.

Once, indeed, when the Maxim gun from over the way first made itself heard, they jumped up with one impulse, wondering what was the matter.

"Lie down, you fools," shouted the colonel, as he galloped up from the front. "Who commands here? Why don't you make your men lie down till they are told to get up? Do you want to make targets of 'em?"

"Now, then, get up and creep along towards the

brow of yonder hill, and then down flat again. Look yonder, d'ye see the enemy defiling from the road into that field where the sheep are? Pitch it into 'em; give it 'em hot; 800 yards, mind; fire away!"

Then he galloped up to another point of observation, and presently galloped back again; this time with the fullest speed, and consternation in his manly countenance. "They are coming up the hill; bolt like *le diable* (he used the other word). Run like *l'enfer*" (again he used the English equivalent, which much surprised me, coming as it did from a *French* colonel).

Up and down the banks they went, helter-skelter; they could not have run faster had they been real Frenchmen. Quickly they disappeared over the brow of the hill; the brave Britishers soon followed, and I fancy must have driven many of them over the cliffs and into the sea. I trust none of them were drowned!

"We'll still make 'em run, we'll still make 'em sweat,
In spite of the Devil and *Brussels Gazette*."

LAMB'S *Letters*.

We all ran as fast as we could, mixed up as we were with the conquering heroes. As we reached the level plateau on the eastern hill the bugle sang truce, and victors and vanquished (that is, as many of the latter as had not hurried over the cliffs towards France) fraternized and smoked in peaceful harmony.

I did not remain for the march past—a rather tame affair, I fancy, compared with what we are led to expect on Monday, when the Duke himself will be present.

I had been running up and down these hills since

ten o'clock, and it was now four. Hungry and rather tired, I bent my weary footsteps hotelwards. Lunch had been waiting for me since one o'clock ; it was five o'clock when I arrived ! That other half of me which I had left behind (and which is the best half by far), alarmed at my unwonted absence, was raising the household and preparing to send out scouts to bring me home, dead or alive. She had made up her mind for the worst : I must certainly have been riddled by rifles, or smashed by a cannon ball, or tumbled over the cliffs. She expected nothing less than to see my mangled remains brought down on an ambulance stretcher, and she had made the whole house a place of lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

When nothing has happened to one, it is at least comforting to know *ante-mortem* how one will be bewept and bewailed when the actual *post-mortem* has happened.

Notwithstanding all this, when she saw me return alive and well, and desperately hungry, she did not, as might naturally have been expected, overwhelm me with caresses. On the contrary, I had to submit with my usual humility to what I inwardly considered to be a good deal of unnecessary "nagging" (if such an expressive term is admissible). I was reproached for going away to see grand sights, leaving her "solitary and alone" (one of which adjectives was surely enough). In vain did I try to explain to her that having once accidentally got right into the midst of the battle it was quite impossible to get out of it till all was over, and it was this alone that caused me to be for once in my life a little late for lunch ("a little

late!" she interjected). Besides, I continued, this was comparatively a small affair; Monday will be the grand day. And as she vowed I was not a fit person to be trusted alone, peace was made between us when I promised to take her with me on Monday in a coach and pair, to witness the grand fight expected to take place by St. Radigund's Abbey.

The Battle of Hougham.

Easter Monday, April 2.

After all the great fight cannot claim the title of "St. Radigund's." But this is to anticipate.

Now the great day has arrived, cold and gloomy, rain clouds hovering above, and mist and fog obscuring the distant hills. We are off at eleven o'clock precisely, in the promised coach and pair. We have a capital pair of horses, and a coachman who "knows the ropes," as the saying is. He dashes up the Dover road, showing every other vehicle the back seat. Soon we get past the Valiant Sailor on the hill, and past the Royal Oak. At the Plough Inn we leave the Dover road, and turning northward along a lane we soon reached Hougham Church; we had led the van all the way, and here we were in the very heart of the battlefield. Our arrival was apparently the signal for beginning hostilities. A gun was fired, and then began such a fusillade all round, on every side of us—such a roaring of cannons, pot-potting of Maxims, crack, crack, crack of Gatlings, as we had never before witnessed.

The churchyard gave us a full view of the main

bodies of assailants and assailed, though which was which we could not tell. Not only did the battle rage on the wide open country in front of us, but from behind every hedge, or wall, or barn, came, as it seemed to us, indiscriminate slaughter all round, and close at hand too; the only wonder is that we and our coach, and our coachman and horses, were not blown to atoms. It was impossible to tell which was invader and which invaded, or which side was gaining ground or likely to be victorious. So far as we could judge, we were right in the very midst of them, and all their guns, from every quarter, were pointed and banging away straight at us. *We* were the enemy, evidently; if not, I feel sure that many of them were pitching into their own friends right and left.

Like the Austrian army besieging Belgrade, in the old alliterative ballad,

"Infuriate, indiscriminate, in ill,
Kinsmen kill kindred, kindred kinsmen kill."

On Saturday, now, there was no mistake; then, the invaders fairly ran away ("bolted like what's-his-name," as they were told to do), many of them over the cliffs, and, I fear me, perishing in the cold water—anywhere, anywhere! they rushed from those accursed Britishers. But to-day there was no knowing how things were going. We, our coach and pair, had led the way into the thick of the strife; now it had become our duty to lead the way out of it. For two mortal hours had we stood on that surely enchanted, or it must have been sanguinary, knoll, exposed alike to all the guns of enemies and friends—in front of a biting

wind and drizzling rain—conspicuous marks for friends or foes.

Our move towards the lane leading down to Elm Vale was clearly the signal for suspension of hostilities. The bugle sang truce, and all was again peace and quietness. Standing our carriage a little on one side of the narrow road during the battle, our coachman had unwittingly allowed a couple of vehicles to get ahead of us. The first was a poor old chap with his old wife and young daughter, in a rickety little cart, drawn by a very rickety little pony; the next was a one-horse chaise, and we followed. The road was very steep and very narrow; not even a horseman could get past us on either side; we formed a perfect wedge, and behind us came an army! The road was very soft and grippy from the melted or still-melting snow, so that, notwithstanding the steep incline, our coachman found it quite unnecessary to put his drag on—his traces were tight all the way down. But the dear old boy in front thought differently: he got down from his vehicle with much pain and trouble, and fumbled about with his drag for ten minutes or more, but for the life of him he could not get it to fit. Good heavens! Why, in real war, that unlucky drag might have been the ruin of our Empire!

“Go on in front, there. What the d—— are you blocking the way for?” shouted an officer immediately behind us. “You don’t seem to know that we have been at work since six o’clock this morning, and I’ve got 10,000 soldiers behind me!” (Probably he slightly exaggerated the numbers!)

“Go on! Go on!” we all shouted, but the old

fellow was quite deaf or stupidly obstinate. At last he did manage to mount again, and jogged on fairly well for about a hundred yards; then he came to sad grief—his rickety cart broke down, fortunately in a place where the road was a very little wider. The old lady and her daughter managed somehow or other to scramble up the bank, and to get over or through the wire fence, and the old man got his cart so far into the ditch as to allow us to pass. How he fared afterwards, with a score of heavy six-horse guns and ammunition wagons to get past him, besides 10,000 troops, I know not. I can only hope he got safe out of it. The sad, scared look upon the poor old lady's careworn, kindly face I shall not soon forget.

Now we are getting down to the level, and approach more open ground.

This is perhaps the proper place to say that H. R. H. the Duke of Cambridge is a very old acquaintance of my wife's. She saw him once at a grand review in Phoenix Park, Dublin (early in the forties), and she has never seen him since. She is curious to see if he has much changed since those early days. Then, she tells me as we slowly progress down the hill, he was a very slim, fresh-coloured youth, very much like one of her sons who is now tending cattle in wild Montana (and *almost* as handsome, she adds), but probably five-and-forty years have wrought a little change in him.

We hope very soon now to see and judge for ourselves. The infantry behind us have here been able to deploy into the open field at the top of the vale, and make their way across to West Hougham road, which runs at the back and eastward of Elm Wood yonder.

We and our heavy artillery have to keep the road we are now on. We are blocked again at Elm Farm (where the *Duke* is lunching with the Mayor of Dover) for a considerable time, and here we have a thick mass of infantry (red coats) in front and back of us. Presently the orders go forth, "Shoulder arms! The Duke is coming!" A passage was squeezed through the crowd behind us, and on he came. As he passed our carriage he glanced in, and my wife at once recognized him.

"It is he! his very self," said she. "I knew him instantly—not changed a bit, only slightly stouter! His face was fresh-coloured then, and is it not fresh-coloured now?"

That glance was a sufficient reward for all the morning's cold and discomfort. That very same glance with which he favoured her now he had given her long before the Prince of Wales was born! She was sure he remembered her quite well. Ah! the delusions of the human female mind. She is, or seems to be, quite unconscious that Father Time has wrought a little change in her since that memorable Phoenix Park review, when the now fast-waning century was yet far from half a century old.

We managed to get into Elm Vale, and by-and-by the whole of the troops marched past us, as it was proper that they should do, for had we not been their centre and their target all the morning? Had we not led them safely down from those perilous bleak heights, to these warm and fertile plains, this glorious and beautiful vale?

Alas! after all we could not get nearer to the grand

stand, the spot where floated the Royal Standard. We could just see the nodding plumes of H.R.H. and his illustrious staff, and that was all; but we had seen *him*, and that was enough for *one* of us at any rate. It was a grand and imposing sight; the hills on both sides of the beautiful vale were packed with spectators. The valley, or at least the eastern slope of it, was reserved for the troops and special tickets; the heights above were fully occupied.

"Ally Sloper" was there in a big balloon, swinging in the bitter wind a hundred feet above the highest heights of the eastern ridge. I trust the old boy was well wrapped, and provided with something warm and comforting.

Picturesque and lovely as was the panorama before us, we were not sorry when the whole of the troops, friends and enemies, had marched past us, and we were once more on the move, however slowly. Now we were no longer in the proud position we had held throughout the day. Our road meets the West Hougham road at the bottom of the vale, so that at this point converged three separate processions, all pressing into the road at the same time. The troops from the valley passed through first; then carriages, carts, wagons, and heavy implements of war from the two meeting roads struggled into the broader single road as best they could.

Now the rain, which had been threatening and performing more or less all day, came down heavily, and must have caused a trying time for many a youth and many a maiden, to say nothing of old men, old women, and little children, who had gone forth in the

morning filled with bright hope to see the gorgeous spectacle, but who had now to return homewards through mud and slush and pouring rain, after having borne the burden and heat of a day on wintry hill tops, carrying with them a load of clayey mud gathered up by their boots, trousers, and dragged petticoats.

Fain would we have given many of the poor, wearied souls a lift in our carriage, but it was not our carriage, it was only a hired one, and we felt we had no right to lend it to others. Besides we could not take them all, so there was nothing for it but to take none.

We reached our hotel in safety, and my wife has got something to add to her store of gossip for the remainder of her days.





LETTER No. III.

AN OUTING WITH IZAAC WALTON ON A FINE
MAY MORNING.

May 12, 1888.



AM the happy possessor of a perfect copy of the first edition of "The Compleat Angler." The title runs thus: "The Compleat Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation."

The above portion of the title-page is beautifully engraved on a scroll, with a pair of dolphins above and a pair below, and a bunch of fish pendant from the tails of the upper ones on either side of the scroll. Then follows in plain type: "Being a discourse of Fish and Fishing, not unworthy the perusal of most anglers. (And between two rules) Simon Peter said, 'I go a-fishing'; and they said, 'We also will go with thee.'—John xxi. 3. (London: Printed by T. Maxey, for RICH. MARRIOT, in St. Dunstan's Churchyard, Fleet-street, 1653.)"

Izaak Walton's name does not appear on this title-page; but in an advertisement of it in "The Perfect

Diurnal," it is said to be "Of eighteen-pence price. Written by Iz. Wa." It was published in the beginning of the month of May.

I have said that my copy is *perfect*, but to be quite truthful, it is necessary to say that when it came into my possession it wanted one leaf of text, otherwise it may truly be said to be a very fine copy. That missing leaf I have since been able to supply, though at an expense of some pounds sterling, so that now to all intents and purposes it is a perfect copy.

It contains many plates finely engraved of various kinds of fish. These plates have been variously attributed to Pierre Lombart, Faithorne, and Vaughan, but the actual engraver is unknown.

Messrs. Westwood and Satchell's invaluable "*Bibliotheca Piscatoria*, 1883," informs me that a fine and perfect copy was then (1883) worth £50 or £60, and constantly increasing in value; the number of collectors whose rule is "*aut Cæsar, aut nullus*," is constantly growing, and I have since been told that such copies cannot now be had for £100.

I do not mention all this to enhance the value of *my* copy, or to seek a bidder for it. I have no present intention of parting with it. Messrs. Westwood and Satchell are good enough to say that "*a FIRST WALTON confers distinction upon its owner*." Knowing of no other way of distinguishing myself, I am vain enough to be proud of having distinction thus thrust upon me.

Now that the "*Fishing Gazette*" is becoming every week more and more interesting, or I should say tantalizing, to one chained, cabined, cribbed, con-

fined within the walls of a great city, I turn to my Walton for comfort, for consolation, for contemplation.

Sitting in my library I read in the "F. G." of what great anglers are doing, have already done, or soon will do, on all the lovely streams and lakes of the country. I read these glowing accounts till I feel the spirit of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness growing within me towards those happy anglers "who daily by fresh rivers walk at will."

Here is the month of May slipping through my fingers, as it were; the time of the May Fly emerging from his watery bed is within measurable distance; he will come and he will go, and I shall not be there to see. What a forlorn lot is his who, being in heart and soul an angler, is fettered and bound to a wooden desk, when he knows that nature intended him to be away "from the town, buried in smoke and sleep and noisome damp," and off "where the mountains lift their green heads to the sky."

"I can stand it no longer," I cried. If I cannot get away in the body I will be off in the spirit. Accordingly I took my *editio princeps* from its careful wrappings, and I wafted myself back about 235 years. At the corner of Chancery Lane in Fleet Street very early one fine May morning I encountered Izaac Walton; he was fully equipped for an angling expedition to the Lea. He looked remarkably well— hale and hearty, and just about my own age.

The dear old gentleman was delighted beyond measure when I told him that I had just finished reading the first edition of "The Compleat Angler" (his second edition had not then been called for), and

that I had dropped down from the latter end of the nineteenth century for the sole purpose of enjoying the pleasure and the privilege of his company (if he would permit it) for a single day. I congratulated myself in having found him just on the point of starting on his favourite pursuit ; he cordially invited me to accompany him. I was glad to be able to tell him that for many generations he had been regarded as "the common father of all anglers," and that his name was venerated and honoured more and more as generation after generation fell into the past, not only by all anglers but by all good men. He was perfectly overwhelmed with astonishment when I told him that his work had already gone through *ninety-nine editions*, and that I had been credibly informed that a young and most enthusiastic disciple of his had now in the press *the one hundredth edition* ; that this young enthusiast was expending a fortune in the production of this edition ; that it would be illustrated by elaborate views from all his favourite rivers ; that it would form two large quarto volumes, and that the published price would be five guineas or more.

"Incredible !" he cried. "Do you not know that my first edition was published for eighteenpence ?" He was still more astounded at the wealth or extravagance of the nineteenth century when I told him that his little eighteenpenny volume was now worth £100. It seemed to me, however, that nothing pleased him more than to be told that this superb edition was to be issued from well-nigh the same spot in the parish of St. Dunstan as that from which was issued the first edition, by Richard Marriot, in 1653.

And so, "full of that innocent revelry in the luxuriance of summer life which only anglers enjoy to the utmost" (as Bulwer says), we chatted along—through merrie Islington; up Tottenham Hill we stretched our legs—our purpose being to drink our morning's draft at the "Thatcht House" in Hodsden—and so on to Ware. On the hill we encountered a gentleman who, on account of his calling, we shall name *Venator*. He was a man of the greatest intelligence and courtesy, but seemed to have but a low opinion of the art of angling, which he regarded as an easy one, and said that many merry hntsmen did make sport and scoff at anglers; but as to hunting, "it is," said he, "a game for princes and noble persons."

You anglers are always jolly, but none of you ever had a pleasanter time than that which now befel me. That walk to the "Thatcht House" was one to be remembered. The air was alive with the songs of birds and the sweet scent of roses and honeysuckles. Our talk was of fish and of angling, and of the fresh beauty of nature. Politics, and the troublous times in which he lived, the dear old boy studiously avoided. I know, from other sources, however, that he was an eminent Royalist, and a very dutiful son of the Church of England. I may add that, although the wisdom of Francis Lord Bacon was frequently on his lips, he never mentioned the name of Shakespeare, nor did he seem to have any knowledge of the Great Cryptogram.

Piscator, who was no other than dear old Izaac himself, defended his art with the utmost spirit. "'Tis an easy thing," said he, "to scoff at any art or

recreation—a little wit, mixt with ill nature, confidence and malice will do it ; but though they often venture boldly, yet are they often caught even in their own trap.” As said Sir Henry Wotton, “Angling was an employment for his idle time, and a rest to his mind, a cheerer to his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness.”

“Indeed,” said Piscator, “we may say of angling as Dr. Boteler said of strawberries, ‘Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did’ ; and so, if I might be judge, ‘God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling.’”

As to the antiquity of angling, is it not a pleasant thing to know that Seth, son of Adam, was an angler, and taught the art to his sons ? It may be assumed that catgut for stringed instruments was known to Tubal Cain. Thence to fishing-lines was but a step, and doubtless he had a corner in his workshop where fish-hooks were made ; and (although Piscator does not suggest it) angling was surely one of Adam’s pleasant relaxations after his daily toil of digging and delving was over.

Job knew all about angling, and the prophet Amos alludes to fish-hooks. It is clear enough that the art of angling was born with our race.

I was amused at the way in which he spoke of the men whom nature hath made of a “soure complexion,” and “condemned them to be rich, and then always busy or discontented” ; “for these poor-rich-men,” said he, “we anglers pity them perfectly.”

And so, in the discussion of such matters as these, Piscator "angled us on," as Venator said, "with much pleasure to 'The Thatcht House'; and I now find your words true," said he, "that good company makes the way seem short, for, trust me, sir, I thought we had wanted three miles of this house. But now we are at it, we'll turn into it, and refresh ourselves with a cup of drink and a little rest." He was also fain to confess that, by help of Piscator's good discourse and company, he had put on new thoughts both of the art of angling and all who profess it. So now that we are well refreshed, let's go to our sport of angling.

Piscator catches a chub, which Venator says is the "worst fish that swims"; but cries Piscator, "You shall see. I'll make it a good fish by dressing it, and I'll be as certain to make him a good dish of meat as I was to catch him. I'll now lead you to an honest ale-house, where we shall find a cleanly room, lavender in the windows, and twenty ballads stuck against the wall."

"Come, hostess! How do you? Will you first give us a cup of your best drink, and then dress this chub as you dressed my last?"

Hostess: "I will do it, Mr. Piscator, and with all the speed I can."

Piscator: "Well, sir, how do you like it?"

Venator: "Trust me, 'tis as good meat as ever I tasted."

After a good lesson on the proper way to dress a chub, Piscator led us on to the trout, and there we had rare sport, and rare instruction with it.

In the next meadow we encountered that same handsome milkmaid who cast away all care and sang like a nightingale, when Piscator was last here.

"Look yonder !" cried Piscator. "On my word, yonder they both be, mother and daughter, a-milking again. I will give her the chub, and persuade them to sing those two songs to us."

We persuaded sweet Maudlin to sing us again that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow, now at least fifty years ago :

" Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, or hills, or fields,
Or woods, and steepy mountains yield."

And the milkmaid's mother sang an answer to it, which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his younger days. It begins thus :

" If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee and be thy love."

" Marry, God requite you, sir, and we'll eat it cheerfully ; and if you come this way fishing two months hence, a grace o' God ! I'll give you a syllabub of new Verjuice, in a new made haycock, for it ; and my Maudlin shall sing you one of her best ballads. For she and I love all anglers—they be such honest, civil, quiet folk ! "

Now we sit down quietly again, and our venerable master gives us further lessons on the art of fishing for trout, whilst Coridon sings for us—

"O, the sweet contentment,
The countryman doth find."

Rain coming on, we once more sat us down under a honeysuckle hedge ; on the other side was a gang of gipsies settling up the division of their week's spoils. At length they came to a sovereign which had to be divided amongst four of them according to rank.

The chief had 1 third = 6*s.* 8*d.*, 3 times = 20*s.*

„ second „ 1 fourth = 5*s.* 0*d.*, 4 „ = 20*s.*

„ third „ 1 fifth = 4*s.* 0*d.*, 5 „ = 20*s.*

„ fourth „ 1 sixth = 3*s.* 4*d.*, 6 „ = 20*s.*

19*s.* 0*d.*

Thus each one got his fair proportion of the sovereign, and yet the total only came to 19*s.* ; the distributor thus pocketed a shilling for himself, and so they fell to a high contest about it, but eventually they left the honeysuckle hedge, and went off to tell fortunes, to cheat, and to get more money and lodging in the next village.

"And now let's every one go to bed, that we may rise early ; but first let's pay our reckoning."

Amateur Angler : "Good night to everybody."

Piscator : "And so say I."

Venator : "And so say I."

We have had a jolly time, my angling friends. What cared we—Izaak Walton and I—that in this same year in which I paid him my unexpected visit, Admiral Blake had defeated Van Tromp and routed the Dutch fleet ; and Oliver Cromwell had dissolved the Long Parliament, and had been proclaimed Protector.



LETTER No. IV.

THE WARREN, FOLKESTONE.

“**T**HE Warren,” I was told, is the great attraction of Folkestone; so I made two separate attempts to find it. There are three Martello Towers on the cliffs to the east of Folkestone, and I was advised to make my way to Tower No. 1, where I should get a bird’s-eye view of the undercliff, which really *is The Warren*. Naturally I made my way to the *first* Martello, on the east cliff, and there I supposed I was getting my bird’s-eye view, and I must say it was a terribly disappointing one. All I could see below me were some acres of broken landslip, covered with thick tufts of grass, and here and there a bramble bush; looking eastward along the face of the cliffs there was little to be discerned but those cliffs apparently slanting more or less irregularly down to the sea. Surely, thought I, there must be something more here than meets the eye from this standpoint. I must explore. So down I went on to the irregular grassy tumps, which are not nice to walk over. Then I remembered

that the place was celebrated for its wealth of natural history subjects—birds, insects, and fossils were to be found of the rarest and most interesting character.

I am not a naturalist, but being here in the very midst of these natural treasures, I immediately began poking about with my umbrella in the hope of something turning up; but I am sorry to say nothing in particular did turn up.

Of insects, I only came across a few black beetles and one green one, and some of those little scaly grubs, which, when you touch them, immediately convert themselves into round pills, which, if swallowed in that convenient form, are said to be good for colds and asthma. Of molluscs, I discovered an immense number of good-sized snails, travelling about in the paths with their houses on their backs; it was difficult to avoid treading on them, but there seemed to be no variety—they were all of one colour and size.

These beetles and snails remind me of Charles Darwin, whose life I have just got through. What a delightful book it is! I wonder if Darwin ever visited this curious place. Here he would probably have found that wonderful *panageus crux-major* which gave him so much delight in his youthful Cambridge days. As a proof of his zeal, he says: "I must tell you what happened to me on the banks of the Cam in my early geological days. Under a piece of bark I found two *carabi* (rare beetles), and caught one in each hand, when, lo and behold! I saw a sacred *panageus crux-major*! I could not bear to give up either of my *carabi*, and to lose *panageus* was out of the question; so that, in despair, I gently

seized one of the *carabi* between my teeth, when, to my unspeakable disgust and pain, the little inconsiderate beast squirted his acid down my throat, and I lost both *panagæus* and *carabi*." ("Darwin's Life," vol. ii. p. 36.)

Even if I had known a rare beetle from a common one, I doubt if my enthusiasm would have carried me so far. His letters, although mostly addressed to scientific men, are full of charming gossip about science, about his family and home, which reveal his character in such a genial, noble, and generous light that one cannot help revering and loving him. But how very small he makes one feel when one remembers that he spent eight years of his life in bringing his genius and rare powers to bear upon the dissection, analysis, and description (in two octavo volumes of over 1,100 pages) of the various kinds of *cirripedia* or barnacles! No wonder that years before he had got through his self-imposed task he had come to hate the very name of *barnacle*. Amongst his discoveries in this direction, he says: "I got the curious case of a unisexual instead of hermaphrodite cirripede, in which the female had the common cirripedal character, and in two valves of her shell she had two little pockets, in each of which she kept a little husband."

After this exhibition of immense toil and eager perseverance expended on a barnacle, being unscientific, one might be allowed to agree with old Lord Stanhope, whom, he says, "he liked very much, though he heartily abused geology and zoology, and said that describing species of birds and shells was all fiddle-faddle."

For some time I perseveringly poked about in this barren waste! sometimes on soft, deceptive, clayey mould, which let me in over my boots. I found here and there a dirty puddle-hole, with water spiders skimming along the surface. At last I had worked myself down to the shore. "Here," I thought, "must be the El Dorado of fossils and shells. Now I shall easily fill my pockets." But after half-an-hour's search I had only picked up one thing, which looked like a small fossilized ram's horn, curled round; somehow it had a metallic look about it. I carried it in my pocket for some time, and then I threw it away. I had my suspicions that my wife would pronounce it to be an old teapot lid; still, it might have been a fossil!

I returned home, a good deal chagrined to find that the Folkestoneites should be proud of such a wretched bit of landslip, and I expostulated with my friend for sending me to such a place. He looked hurt and surprised. "Why! Where did you go?" said he.

"To the *first Martello Tower*," said I.

"Phew!" he whistled; "why, you haven't seen the Warren at all. The first Martello Tower is *No. 3*; I told you to go to *No. 1*, which is the *third* tower from here. They are numbered from the Dover side. You must have another try. Go to *No. 1*, and you will there get a bird's-eye view; but even there you won't see much of the beauty of the place; and then go down to a funny little inn called "*The Warren Inn*." There you will find a path which will lead you down to a place where, if you have eyes to see, I think you will change your opinion of "*The Warren*"!

The next day, which happened to be fine and bright, but windy, I followed his direction, and this time I was landed safe in "The Warren," and hey! what a place it is!—a mighty maze without any plan, "a wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous grow," and what a deception was practised on my perhaps rather dim eyesight, when yesterday I looked over to these cliffs from the first (No. 3) Martello Tower! How could I have imagined that between the upper cliff and the shore there were great valleys and little hills and dales, many acres of good grassland, up and down which were scores of cattle grazing! The deception, at all events to old eyes, is caused by the sides of the various ravines facing the sea being mostly chalk cliffs, like the upper and lower cliffs, and one does not see that behind these various facets whole valleys intervene—so that probably, if one were to measure from the top of the highest cliff, and take all the ups and downs till we get down to the sea, the width would in some places be nearly a mile; whilst to look at the cliffs in front from the sea, you would suppose that two or three hundred yards at most would cover the whole distance from the highest and widest part down to the water.

I forgot all about botany, birds, insects, and fossils. I had enough to do to look after my footing, as I wandered in amazement at the unexpected scenes all the time opening up before me. They tell me there are about three miles in length of this remarkable undercliff through which you can wander and wonder; but I did not penetrate so far, for it is weary work—you cannot find ten yards of level walking in the

whole place. It is all up and down, and it is quite impossible to go straight ahead; there are no end of paths, and none of them lead anywhere. You follow one, and it brings you to the edge of a precipice; you retrace your steps, and are tempted by another, which leads you down to a hole or a small lake; you pursue another, perhaps for fifty yards or so, and you find yourself stopped by brambles and thorn bushes. You hark back, and presently you come to the top of a deep cutting, at the bottom of which, 200 feet below, runs the prosaic train, darting like a rabbit from one tunnel-hole to another, as if it were ashamed to be seen in such a wild wilderness.

Unfortunately it was too early for wild flowers. I saw nothing in bloom but the Guelder rose, and that was only just peeping out. Here and there you come to covers of brambles, hawthorns, and various bushes; over which bryony, honesty, and other creepers have formed curious little bowers and covered pathways, under which you can creep and get lost.

The further one gets into this enchanting maze, the more curious it becomes. Take your stand on the top of some small pinnacle; look around, and you may fancy you have got into a tiny, fairy Switzerland. Here you have peaks and mountains, rocks, ravines, lakes, precipices, pinnacles, and dells, and even avalanches are not wanting to complete the picture. I was loath to leave this tiny bit of England chipped and crumbled off the old block; but hoping some time or other to see and explore it more minutely and leisurely, I tore myself away. Turning homewards, I stumbled on a pretty reptile about eighteen inches long, the

size of a dog-whip; it was not an adder—I know those fellows too well. I suppose it was a grass snake; at all events, it seemed to be deaf and asleep, and it allowed me to take it upon the point of my umbrella; but then it darted off over the tops of the long grass with the speed of a frightened trout—it certainly was not a *slow* worm. I venture to think that not one in a hundred of the casual visitors to Folkestone have seen, or even heard of, this pretty bit of Fairyland.





LETTER No. V.

A DAY'S FLY-FISHING IN AUGUST.

August 25, 1888.



HAVE lived too long in this curious world not to know that what the preacher saith is true, "All is vanity!" but the "vanity of vanities," is to expect to catch trout in the middle of August (by the calendar), when the wind is blowing half a gale from the north-east, the thermometer at winter range, and the sun only conspicuous by his absence. Such a day was last Friday. I single out this day, not because it was by any means an exception to the ordinary run of days experienced during the present winter (miscalled summer), but because for weeks past I had fixed upon this particular day for relaxing my wearied business brain on the banks of a pleasant stream. Accompanied by Piscator, nothing daunted by the vile wind that was blowing, fired with my usual enthusiasm, I started early in the morning, full of confidence that by the time we reached our stream (thirty miles from town) the wind would go down or turn round and convert quasi-March into real

August for our special convenience. But it was not to be ; my usual luck when I go a-fishing was with us on Friday.

A bleak morning waxed and waned into a raw afternoon and biting evening. How could enthusiasm be maintained in such weather ? Where were the swallows ? What were the little birds about ? Where were the wasps and bees ? A solitary sand martin here and there flitted past in vain search for insects. A snipe now and then darted up stream. Rats were plentiful, and flopped into the water or swam on the top of it with perky impudence. A lone heron occasionally arose from the meadow water-courses, and swung his lazy wings, which bore him with seeming slowness but with real speed away into the hazy distance. A leaden atmosphere accompanied by a soft warm breeze would have suited us well, but a steel-faced wind under dismal clouds was depressing and discouraging enough.

Here we are landed in the Weald of Kent, on a beautiful stream, with three miles of preserved water, full of good trout, and wanting nothing but the one thing needful—which we surely had a right to expect in the month of August—the genial, pleasant, joyous weather that makes mere existence a pleasure, and fishing amid charming scenery an exquisite delight. Did we enjoy this pleasure ? No ! Did we experience this exquisite delight ? Not a bit of it !

Piscator persuaded me as we were hurrying to catch our train to rush into a shop and buy a pair of india-rubber boots to preserve my legs and feet, as he said, from the long wet grass. I had not time to try them on, the shopman knew at a glance they would fit like

a glove, so I rejoiced in my purchase, and we caught our train.

Arrived at our destination, I took off my easy boots, in which I could have walked twenty miles without inconvenience, and donned that precious pair of "pickling tubs." Certainly, they were large enough—far too large, indeed. Piscator assured me that was a good fault in india-rubbers; and having the fear of wet feet in mind, I rather doubtfully and unwillingly kept them on. Away we trudged to the bottom of our water, to fish up stream, with the wind at our backs. We walked about two miles to reach this point. I found the grass was perfectly dry, and the ground underneath cloddy and as hard as flint; before I had cast a line, I had sufficient cause to bitterly bewail the want of my old boots.

We began our fishing, the north-east "blustering railer" whistling round our ears and chilling our backs. Piscator cared nothing for that, but I am more sensitive—I am an old man, and not used to it. He advised me, as there were no flies about, and the trout were not rising, to throw up the stream, and let my flies sink two or three inches in the water. I practised this method for about two hours without a rise or sign of a fish; then I bethought me to try a little dry fly-fishing. I saw a rise in a likely hole; I swung my fly dry, and cast it with the utmost precision. My little "Red Rail" floated upright and jauntily over the spot where I had seen the rise, and a big trout came at me. I struck in the *ninety-ninth* part of a second, but I was too late. The fish in this stream consider him a "duffer" who cannot strike in

the *one-hundredth* part of a second, and that, I regret to say, is a point of perfection at which I have not yet arrived. The ninety-ninth I can reach easily. Again I threw over him; again he came at me. I missed him again only by that one-hundredth vibration—a narrow squeak for him, you may be sure; but he knew his superiority, and clearly enjoyed the fun of playing with a duffer. He became bold and careless; he tried the ninety-ninth vibration of a second, by way of experiment, and I had him. He jumped half a yard clean out of the water, and otherwise fought like a demon, enraged more, I am certain, at being caught napping as it were in this way, than if he had been fairly hooked, as he knew he ought to have been, in the one-hundredth part of a second—that infinitesimal point of time making all the difference to these very learned fish.

I said I *had* him. We played together for some time, he trying the many dodges he knew of; at length I brought him to the side, and shouted to Piscator to bring his landing-net, I being unwisely unprovided with one. He came. “A good pounder!” cried he, as he dipped his net (it was one of those confounded collapsing, doubling-up things; thus, when he thought he was getting the fish into the net, he was really striking it out of it). At last he broke the hold, my line slackened, and my pound trout will, doubtless, grow into a three or four-pounder before he again ventures to try experiments in the decimal fractions of a second.

This loss, I need not say, flustered me a good deal, but I continued my dry fly-fishing; and Piscator complimented me on my dexterity.

I rose many more good fish, but owing to my being as yet unable to accomplish that velocity in striking which is represented by the one-hundredth part of a second, I only succeeded in hooking and basketing one other trout.

Piscator was more successful. Considering the unpropitious weather, he thought he had done fairly well in carrying home three brace. After seven hours of perseverance under difficulties, and with only a few sandwiches to sustain us, we struck for the station—by this time my “poor feet” were in such a state of soreness and inflammation that I could scarcely hobble, and I was exhausted for want of food. We had to wait two hours at the station for our train—this being a small village, trains only stop here at long intervals—and nothing in the way of refreshments is obtainable.

I asked myself, when I got home, if my realized pleasure had equalled my anticipation, and the answer I got was, that what “the preacher” says is true, “it’s all vanity and vexation of spirit.” Next morning I awoke with a stiff neck, and a touch of lumbago, notwithstanding which the hope of a successful day springs so perpetually in my breast, that I know I shall be tempted to try again whenever opportunity offers.

My *tormentors* I sent back to the shop as a misfit. The proprietor took them back, and returned the money, kindly overlooking the fact that I had worn them a day, in consideration for the torture they had inflicted on me. In future I shall stick to my old boots.



LETTER No. VI.

THE FIRST OF OCTOBER, 1888.



WILL cast business to the winds and physic to the dogs, I said, after long and weary waiting for a holiday ; for something always cropped up to prevent a start. Business is not, after all, the most important object in life ; let it take care of itself for awhile, I said, and I will seek health and mental repose—not from physic, but from fishing. We had at last found a temporary dwelling by the sea, within convenient reach of the Hampshire Itchen ; and, better still, we—that is, Piscator and I—had the rare chance of fishing the “ Doctor’s ” water, as charming a stretch as is to be found anywhere on that prolific river. Monday, October 1, 1888, was the day on which, for the first time in my life, I went on set purpose a-grayling fishing. The novelty of the occupation, the charm of the scenery, the soft loveliness of the bright autumn day, and hospitality of our host, the Doctor—whose “ physic ” was not of the kind we usually “ fling to the dogs ”—combined to make it a day to be recorded in red in my diary and in my memory.

GRASSHOLME ISLAND.



GRASSHOLME ISLAND.

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If the mere catching fish comprised all the pleasure to be got from going a-fishing, then I am bound to say that very small pleasure would have been mine, for it is a pleasure far more akin to pain to me to wrench a hook from a grayling's mouth ; but that, of course, is mere amateurish sentiment—no angler worthy of the name ever entertained the smallest doubt that a cold-blooded fish can possibly feel any pain ; it is only an unusual sensation of unexpected pleasure that causes them to writhe and wriggle as they do. The reason, perhaps, that I am but a sort of half-hearted fisherman is this want of faith in its painlessness. I saunter by pleasant rivers, and cast my line upon the water, somewhat indifferent as to whether I catch a fish or not ; and that, of course, is why I do not catch them. I complain not of my bad luck when I fail ; I am not proud of my success when I succeed. Give me a pleasant murmuring river, a genial day, and a wooded landscape, and I am content.

All this, and much more, I had on Monday, the feast of *St. Pheasant*. We took train for Bishopstoke, and reached there at ten o'clock. There was the Doctor waiting for us in his carriage, in which he had come from Southampton. He soon made us feel at home, and he drove us to the scene of our labours, a mile or two from the town. I need not describe its locality more closely ; it is in a part where the river winds its devious course through a valley of green meadows, margined on all sides by uplands crowned with spreading trees.

The Doctor's genial nature and quaint humour have been mentioned in your paper before to-day. On

reaching the river it was arranged that Piscator and I should take the upper reach above bridge, whilst he took the meadows below. This was a little trick of the Doctor's, to give us the best fishing, both above and below. We were fairly successful ; I took a brace and a half of half-pound grayling, and Piscator took three and a half brace, including one of $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. The Doctor meanwhile had only been pretending to fish, in order to give us a chance in the lower meadows ; one of his favourite maxims being that it pleased him far more to see his guests catch fish than to catch them himself. The Doctor has rented this water for many years past, and at the lower end of it, at a point where the river flows under the wood, he has erected a cosy little fishing hut—a cool retreat from the burning summer sun, a welcome shelter from the passing storm, and a delightful spot for the tired angler to rest his weary limbs, and to partake of the good things there to be found through the provident care and fore-thought of the Doctor and his coachman and factotum, Beavis.

We had fished the upper and more rapid currents before lunch. Now we had come down to the deep water and slower current of the lower meadows ; the Doctor, instead of fishing here as he said he would, had reserved them for our post-prandial entertainment. Here the big grayling lay, down here, in a deep hole where the river takes a sweeping curve, and the banks are open all round, so that nothing can pass without casting its shadow on the water—down here it is that the Doctor keeps his “patients.” The hole is very deep and broad, and swarms with the biggest grayling that ever were seen, and for years has the

Doctor fished that hole without ever catching one of them. They are the cunningest grayling ever known. They are not to be caught by a sham fly on a nasty hook ; they can see the hook, and the gut, and the line, and the rod, and the man. "*Dum capimus capimur*" is then their motto, and nothing pleases them better than to mark their contempt of him than by sucking in a real insect within an inch or two of the sham one, and make believe that they have given him a rise—and so they constantly take rises out of him.

I did not venture to bring my 'prentice hand to bear upon these learned fishes, which the Doctor had educated *not* to be caught by himself or by any one else. Piscator tried his skill upon them in vain. It was pleasant to see the way in which, crouching on one knee, and making himself as invisible as possible, he would swing backwards and forwards twenty yards of line, and drop his fly over the very nose of a rising grayling. It was equally amusing to see how scornfully the fish would reject his imitation, and snatch the real close by.

Meanwhile my more humble efforts were directed to the rapid streams, where grayling of less sophisticated nature and smaller size abounded. I fished energetically—too energetically perhaps—but my afternoon did not equal my morning's success, though I have been unable to explain why: true it is that the Doctor's '70 claret had more body in it than its seductive lightness of flavour indicated, and the champagne partaken in that little straw-built cot under the wood may have been a little more exciting than usual. Of course I had limited my attention to

these seductions within the bounds of my usual moderation ; yet, nevertheless, I will frankly admit that my afternoon casting was wanting in that unerring precision which had marked my morning performances. Altogether it was one of those ideal days that one sometimes dreams of but rarely experiences in these latter days.

Be it understood that I write as one whose life is spent in the middle of London—where sunrises and sunsets are never seen, and where the mid-day sun but rarely penetrates. To those whose lot is cast in country places such days, no doubt, are too common to be marked by any unusual enthusiasm. The Doctor drove us back to the station, we reached home late in the evening, and congratulated ourselves on our successful pleasant day. Alas ! there is no joy but has its attendant sorrow. Our day after all had a sad and almost tragic ending.

We had left home in London on Saturday morning, and now on Monday night comes this letter from the man whom we had left in charge of our house :

“ Sir,—I am obliged to inform you that the cat is locked in the drawing-room, as I can hear it crying. —Yours obediently, T. K.”

This letter, written on Sunday, had been mis-directed, and did not reach me till late on Monday night—too late to telegraph, too late to send the key, too late to do anything ; and poor old Charlie had been in solitary confinement and without food already for at least fifty-six hours ; it will be nearly seventy before he can be reached. It is well known to some of my readers that I am not partial to cats, but

willingly as I would see many of them exterminated, on not one of them would I like to inflict the torturing, lingering death by starvation, to which our poor old Charlie seemed now to be condemned.

Charlie is always in a watchful and excited state when he sees packing up going on ; he cannot bear to be left alone. I had carried him out of the drawing-room only a few minutes before locking it, but he must have slipped in again unperceived.

Charlie, though not without his faults, is what may be called a respectable family cat. He is now in the twelfth year of his age, and has seen a generation of children grow up and pass out of this house, and has welcomed the visits of the small members of a second generation, and may therefore be regarded as an important member of the family ; and him to be starved and brought to such a cruel end !

I found that I could gain at least four hours over every other means of relief by going up to town myself next morning. I went, I found the man, I unlocked the door, fearing to find a dead skeleton of a cat, and out Charlie trotted, looking more glossy and fatter than usual. The man had fed him with bits of cat's-meat through the key-hole.





LETTER No. VII.

THE LAST OF OCTOBER.

THE first of October I recorded as a red-letter day for me. I have had several glorious days since then in this glorious month of October. Each succeeding day finer and brighter and more genial than the last. The wind during the month has gradually worked itself round from north north-east to south-east, south, and south-west, till now, at the end of the month, we are beginning for the first time this year to have charming summer weather.

When I began fishing for grayling on the first of this month, I had still left in me some feeling of compunction for the pain I thought I was inflicting on the struggling grayling when I extracted my hook from his gullet with a pen-knife. Since I gave expression to that feeling in your paper, a celebrated writer, who is, I believe, prouder of landing a thirty-pound salmon than he is of writing a brilliant novel, has assured me that "The Amateur Angler's" sensitiveness is quite misplaced. "Fish," he says, "have no sensory nerves, and are, therefore, quite incapable of feeling pain.

They have told me so themselves." On such evidence I ought to be, if I am not quite, convinced. I want to know at what point it is in the scale of animated nature, amongst animals, birds, insects, whales, sharks, and all the fishes, where pain ceases to be felt. Whales and seals being air-breathing and warm-blooded animals cannot be called fish, and I presume they do possess the sensory nerves which convey pain to the brain. I should be sorry to find that sharks and pike cannot feel pain; but for most other creatures it would be pleasant to know that one cannot hurt them. I wonder if these happy beings are equally devoid of any sensation of pleasure.

Then was a greater writer even than Mr. William Black wrong in telling me that—

"The poor beetle that we tread upon,
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies"?

True it is, that Shakespeare, like Mrs. Poyser, was born before "sensorial nerves" were invented.

Fish are excellent food, therefore it is quite right for fish-eating animals to kill and eat them—that, after all, is the true *argumentum ad hominem*, and it is useless to argue against one's own proclivities. The Ettrick Shepherd settled the question long ago.

"North. You hear people talk of anglers as cruel.

Shepherd. Fools! Fools, waur than fools! It's a maist innocent, poetical, moral, and religious amusement. . . . As for me, we devour dizzens every week in the family, maistly dune in the pan wi' plenty o' fresh butter, an' roun' meal. Sae that prevents the possibility o' cruelty in my fishin'."

I have twenty miles and more to travel to my fishing

ground, and I have not yet reached the station. As I was hurrying there the other day, on fish destruction bent, I was suddenly stopped by a curious adventure on the pavement. One insect had got another by the throat, and was struggling to carry him along from one side of the path to the other ; it was like a puny infant of four trying to carry a fat thirty-pound baby. I touched the murderer with the point of my stick, a little black wretch, something over an inch in length ; he dropped his victim, a grasshopper quite as big as himself, turned, cocked up his tail, which seemed to have eyes in it, stared at the stick as much as to say, "Who are you? Do that again if you dare." Then he turned again, seized his wriggling prey, and was making off with it. I again gave him a poke. "Heyho," thinks he, "there's something up ; I must be off." He started, leaving the dying hopper on the pavement. When he had got a yard away I retired three or four yards ; he stopped, cocked up his perky tail. "Heyho !" says he again, "the coast is clear ; I'm not going to leave that fat grasshopper for nothing." Then he began circling round and round, gradually nearing, till he was within a few inches, then he stopped, cocked up his tail as usual, and pretended to look surprised, as if he had never seen a grasshopper before in his life. "Hello !" says he, "why that must be a hopper." Then he made a rush at him, seized him by the throat, and was making off, when I again interrupted him. Then he threw him down in disgust, and started at full speed towards the hedge. I did not think it necessary to arrest him, but I considered it only an act of mercy to end what seemed to me the

very painful, though it may have been pleasurable, but certainly dying struggles of the poor hopper, by smashing the little life that was left in him into nothing with my boot. The performer in this small tragedy used to be called, when I was a country boy, "*The Devil's Coach Horse*," and I know of no other or more appropriate name for him. Scientifically I believe he is known as *Staphylinus (Ocybus) olens*.

I wonder how he first got hold of the springy and active hopper: probably caught him napping, and then his first operation was to hamstring him with his powerful mandibles; the rest was easy enough.

One day we had the privilege of fishing in another water higher up the river, and splendid sport we should have had, but some thoughtless individual had deemed it proper to cut the weeds above



THE DEVIL'S COACH HORSE.

that morning, so that although it was a sight to see the flies on the water, more like the May-fly time than any other, and the grayling were rising like mad things, it was most difficult to get a decent cast without being caught by a weed; nevertheless, we made fairly good baskets and were delighted with our sport.

Another day our friend was not at the accustomed spot when our train arrived, so we trudged off, expecting and hoping that he would catch us up, but he came not; he had been unexpectedly detained at home. We fished contentedly, but having made no provision for the healthy appetites that line-swinging gives, we did not fare so sumptuously as we had

usually done in the Doctor's den, *piscatoribus sacrum*. We fed on bread and cheese, and were satisfied.

And so the month has passed, our holiday is over. On my last day the Doctor insisted on my going over from Southsea to Southampton to breakfast with him, and to view some wonderful oil paintings of fish and fishing scenes, which had recently come into his possession. They were painted by Mr. Targett, of Salisbury. Although as a rule I am no great admirer of fishy pictures, I am bound to admit that I consider these paintings worth going a very long way to see. The mantle of Rolfe has fallen upon Targett. There is a salmon in one of the pictures which seemed to me simply perfect, as different from one of those things one sees on a fishmonger's slab as a caged lion is from the monarch of the jungle. I fancy there are not many fish painters; the great painters who could do these things—Millais, for example, himself an ardent angler—have "other fish to fry"; and it seems to me that Mr. Targett has a great field open to him.

We drove over to the water, the last time for me. It was, I may be allowed for the last time to say, a glorious day. The wind was exactly where it ought to be to suit our side of the Itchen. A gentle south-west breeze was only rippling the smooth surface of the water. We found the grayling were in full sport; the big ones in the deep pools quietly poking their noses up and sucking in the flies, making but very small circles in the water; whilst the smaller ones in the shallow streams would flop up with dash and splash, as if to make believe they were monsters, but sadly disappointing one when they came into our net.

At the Doctor's first cast, he brought to land a pound and a half grayling. This was exciting, and promised well for the day ; and here a curious thing happened. He brought the fish up to the side, but he had no net ; his gillie had not then arrived. I ran down to help, and got my hand down to the water close to the fish, when "He's off," cried the Doctor, and his line swung loose. "No, he is not," said I, and I got my hand round him and safely threw him on the grass. In truth, he *was* "off." I found the fly in his lip, but the gut had snapped ; in fact, the grayling lay on the water thinking he was caught, and so quietly gave up the fight, though he was lively enough when thrown on the grass. He had fought well, but was certainly not drowned, though possibly stunned for a moment, and in that moment I had him.

I wonder if this is a novel or common experience of grayling anglers. I am aware that Izaak Walton and Cotton had but a poor opinion of the fighting qualities of a grayling ; but certainly the grayling in these waters have these qualities in perfection.

The Doctor's good beginning was followed by continued success, whilst I was unlucky. I hooked a good many, but frequently failed to land them, having no gillie and no net ; Davis, the old rascal, had gone to Winchester fair. Piscator's fishing days were already over ; he had gone back to grind at "the mill," whither, alas ! I have now followed him.



LETTER No. VIII.

MY HOLIDAY ON THE WYE.

September 7, 1889.



DO not intend to localize my holiday beyond saying that I dwelt in an old farmhouse on a knoll in a bend of the beautiful river Wye, bounded on one side by that fine river, and on the other by wood-clad hills rising one above another, every peep from which on the ascent up a steep and shady lane affords glimpses of a far-stretching landscape. A very stiff climb to the highest point rewards one with a panorama not easily to be matched elsewhere. From this point we can descry peaks and clumps, which represent at least eight fair counties. At our feet the great river winds its devious way for a score of miles or more through the richest green meadow lands. Our old farmhouse, roomy and comfortable enough inside, bears on its outside the weather-beaten aspect which may be expected from the wear and tear of more than three centuries of summer's heat and winter's snow and frost; all the farm buildings bear the same marks of a crumbling and hoary but still substantial old age.

The river forms on one side the boundary of the farm for a couple of miles of its winding ways, and near the house passes under a handsome six-arched bridge, which has stood the buffeting of many a wild flood, for the river, when it does burst its bounds, comes down like a raging inland sea; its risings, owing to its numerous tributaries and proximity to Welsh hills, from which it has its source, are sudden and abundant, and the sheep and cattle on its banks need to be vigilantly watched. So suddenly has the river been known to rise, that villagers living on its banks have at times to take refuge in their bedrooms, and are exposed to strange adventures. One wild night, when the river threatened to wash away the cottage of a farm labourer, the man, determined to save his pig and his hive of bees, had carried them upstairs into his bedroom; to add to his troubles the pig upset the hive, the bees swarmed out and stung their owner—who was only once removed from a “state of nature”—so badly, that to escape them he jumped into bed to his wife. What happened then I know not, for there the story endeth.

Another story connected with the flood may be worth mentioning. An old gentleman, well known in the neighbourhood and the country round, who was cordially hated for his harsh and arbitrary ways as a magistrate and his haughty bearing as a man, happened to tumble into the river in flood time, and would certainly have been drowned but for the timely help of an old shepherd, who brought him to land with his crook. “What can I say to you, my man,” said the magistrate, “for saving my life?” “God’s sake, sir,” cries

the shepherd, "say nothing about it. If our folks should hear that I've been such a durned fool as to pull you out of the water they'll certainly chuck me into it!"

Just above the bridge and at foot of our meadows it flows under a wooded upland as majestically and as picturesquely grand almost as the Thames in its most noted haunts. Truly it is a noble river, and pity it is, and sad to say—*there are no fish in it!* That remark must not, of course, be taken too literally. *There are* fish in it. Occasionally even one sees a big salmon flop up and make a great splash just for fun; but compared with what such a splendid stream ought to possess it is fair to say it is empty, at least, of good sporting fish; and the reason is (be it remembered I speak only of the small stretch of half a dozen miles with which I became acquainted) that it is netted and poached in every conceivable way. Little salmon ("lastsprings," as they call them) are taken by the thousand by net and by hook; and there appears to be no one to caution the depredators as to the law they are breaking and the penalties they incur. In the course of a day's fishing one gets hold of an occasional small 4 oz. trout from a pool which ought to hold many a 2 lb. or 3 lb. fish—a clear proof that there are no big ones there, for if there were there would certainly be no small ones.

We fished this river day in and day out with all the enjoyment and all the delight which the novel charm of wandering along the banks and through the green meadows, amid such lovely scenery, could afford to us who pass such a long and weary portion of the brief

time allotted to our earthly pilgrimage within the walls of a great and smoky city ; but we caught no fish to speak of. A few roach, some fair-sized perch, a small trout now and then, and an endless number of the pestering little samlets, which we, of course, threw back to their own element, were all we could boast about.

Had I been alone my native modesty would have assured and satisfied me that my want of luck was owing to my want of skill, but *Piscator Major* was with me, and I was willing to fail in such company. He brought all his learning and educated skill to bear upon this water without avail. He waded, he threw his flies over every inch of the water, he spun his minnows in the finest style across every pool and up and down every stream, but neither pike, nor salmon, nor trout, nor grayling rewarded his energy. So far as fishing was concerned ours was a hopeless holiday ; but, as I have already hinted, we were not unhappy. On the contrary, we had a very jolly time at this old farmhouse. We were out in all weathers. When we were not fishing we were photographing (for *Piscator* is an adept, and many a lovely bit of rural scenery we brought home with us), or climbing the hills, riding or picnicing, shooting pigeons, wild ducks, or anything, and the time passed along merrily enough, but all too swiftly.

If there is any human being whose lot one might be inclined to envy, I really think it would be that of a young well-to-do farmer's son. Here, now, is a young fellow, just rising twenty, fairly educated, good principled, of robust health, fine physique, splendid

appetite, and excellent digestion. Let me call him Gus. Gus rises early (say, five o'clock), and is off with his gun to the meadows or the barley fields, and is back again to breakfast with a brace of wild duck or a couple or two of plump young wood-pigeons.

It is needless to say that Gus possesses a dog—a black and white Scotch sheep-dog of remarkable intelligence; he is called Fuss. Together they have formed themselves into a “Mutual Admiration Society.” Gus regards Fuss as the cleverest of dogs, and Fuss worships Gus as the cleverest of men. Fuss is quite unhappy if Gus is away for a few hours; he sleeps at the foot of Gus's bed and may be said to take all his meals with him; at table he rests his fore-paws close to Gus's plate—there he gets many a choice morsel. There is only one subject on which Fuss and his master are not agreed. Gus is passionately fond of fishing; Fuss hates it. He thinks it is the most absurd waste of time conceivable; he follows his master, of course, but he does everything a dog can do to lure him away to the gun and the wild ducks. Fuss is a capital sheep-dog, and will “round up” a flock of sheep in no time; but it is not his favourite occupation—he thinks it rather slow work—he very much prefers poaching of all sorts. As to his master, I need only add that he sings a good song, plays the violin admirably, and performs his duties about the farm faithfully. He is happier than a prince, for he has no care or troubles, and leaves all business worries to older heads.

Fuss gave us a taste of his deviating ways from the narrow path of a good honest sheep-dog on the first

evening of our arrival at the farm. We started for a walk through the fields and across the meadows to the river bank. Fuss and his master were with us. Soon we heard a loud yelping in the hedgerow, and on going up to the place we found that Fuss was waging fierce war against a hedgehog. The poor innocent urchin had of course rolled himself up into a prickly ball—his only means of defence—and the problem for Fuss to solve was how to unroll him so far as to get just one grip of his nose ; that would have settled his fate promptly. Gus was for putting his foot on the prickly back, and so squeeze out the nose for Fuss to seize ; but we of Cockneydom begged hard for his life. We thought he was the very chap we wanted to eat the slugs in our suburban gardens. So we rolled him up in a pocket-handkerchief and carried him carefully across two or three fields. Then somehow we got tired of him ; we began to wonder how the deuce we should keep him in captivity till the end of our holiday, and then convey him to London ; besides this, we soon discovered that his prickledom, as usual, swarmed with fleas, so we carefully unrolled him into a ditch.

Fuss certainly came off second best in the encounter, although this was not the first urchin he had slaughtered by long odds. In his desire to show off before the Cockneys he forgot his usual caution, and consequently his nose was considerably inflamed from the punctures of that spiny little pig. He did not recover for a week. This, however, did not prevent his seeking fresh adventures. In the next field he had a grand chevy after a young hare (or *monkey*, as they are

called here at this time of the year). Gus feebly scolded and called Fuss back, whilst we Cockneys spurred him on for the fun of the thing. At the far side of the field, after a splendid run, Fuss caught the hare and killed him at one grip of his powerful jaw. Here was unsportsmanlike conduct indeed! Gus was, or pretended to be, ashamed of his wicked behaviour, and promised him a tremendous thrashing, which he never got. The "monkey" was jugged next day.

On our return homeward, Fuss started a rat in a deep-ditched hedgerow, and we had an exciting time of it. The rat must have been on an exploring expedition from the farm buildings; he was clearly not at home, having no holes to run into, consequently he kept Fuss alive, sometimes up to the top of the bushes, and then down to the water, till at length he came to a welcome drain, too small for Fuss to get into, and so he escaped.

Life at a farmhouse depends very much upon the liver; it is easy to be dull and bored with everything. For my part I felt a lively interest in every living and creeping thing about the place. I stood in a shed for half an hour and watched the antics of a host of little birds picking up insects on the mixen. There were a pair of shy but very beautiful bullfinches, chaffinches, tits, robins, wagtails and sparrows—all industriously at work together, not always in a very harmonious way. One cock sparrow in particular had a mean spite against cock robin—he flew at every one he came near, and chased him round the yard.

What much surprised me was the ignorance of

most of the people as to the names of the most familiar birds or flowers. One of the most intelligent workmen about the place brought me as a great curiosity a strange bird he had just shot. I saw at once by its shape and plumage that it was a turtle dove, and the next day I saw a pair of these birds in the orchard. This man had lived in the village all his life, a capital shot, an all-round sportsman who would neglect his work any time for a run with the hounds, or a day's shooting or fishing—and yet he vowed he had never seen a bird like this before ! It is the smallest and prettiest of its kind. The late Dr. Bull, in his "Notes on the Birds of Herefordshire," says "it is more frequently heard than seen, being shy in its habits, and inconspicuous in its plumage. Consequently it is much less known than most birds that are equally common ; and even when seen it is frequently not recognized. It is a spring visitant from Africa." This may explain the workman's ignorance.

Then there was the poultry yard. What fun it was to see the rush from all the yards and orchards round when the maid appeared with the bucket of food ! The ducks and the geese they all came over and made the most noise wobbling up the hill, but the turkeys and chickens were generally first in the field. Hundreds of these feathered bipeds surrounded the maid with her great wooden ladle, but the ducks were the funniest of all. When they had gobbled till they were nearly choked, the leader of the band—an old drake—would suddenly turn round and start off as fast as he could hobble or wobble towards the duck

pond, all the rest following in line, quack-quacking all the way till they got to the edge of the pond. They did not rush into the water as one might have expected; they gobbled up a good drink at the margin to assist digestion and make room for more stuffing, and then with a great quack, quack, the old drake led the van back as fast as he could waddle to the food trough; but by this time the wise geese had cleared up everything, and the foolish greedy ducks could only quack out their disgust and disappointment.

One bright day we got up a picnic to the Welsh mountains. I wanted to revisit a scene where I had once imperilled my life, more than fifty years ago. So we made up a party of fourteen—young men and maidens, old men and matrons. We started by an early train, for our destination was fifty miles away. "Water-break-its-neck" is as charming a bit of Swiss-like scenery as can be found anywhere, but it is hidden away in a nook in the mountains, unknown and uncelebrated, except by a few local enthusiasts, who regard it as one of the world's wonders. The water—a rushing torrent when there has been much rain—comes down from the mountain top over three successive cascades, through a picturesque rocky ravine. The "Falls of Lodore" are nothing to it, and the "Swallow Falls," at Llanberris, do not come near it in rugged beauty. The sides of the ravine are almost perpendicular, but affording some support for foot and hand by jutting rocks, and here and there a small shrub; the height from bottom to top is probably three hundred or four hundred feet.

As a small schoolboy of the mature age of thirteen,

I and another ventured this climb. Half way up, we dared not come down, and we scarcely dared go up, for the shaly stones were constantly giving way under our feet, and the tough little twigs we had to hold on by became fewer and fewer as we ascended. It was impossible to return; we *must* go up; and, somehow or other, up we went till we got within two or three feet of the top, which we could by no means reach. We shouted to our companions in fear and trembling. They, as much frightened as ourselves, ran round and got up the mountain by an easy path, and there they found us clinging for our lives. They took off their strong jackets. One was let down to me by a boy lying at full length on the ground. I grasped the two arms of it, and by this stout garment, and the use of my toes in the shingly rock, I landed safely. My young companion came up by the same frail process. We blessed our tailors for the strength of their stitching and the toughness of their cloth.

This little adventure has always been fresh in my memory, and now by a curious coincidence my boy companion, whom I had rarely seen since that adventure, was again with me, a grave and vigorous old man. He and his wife, a sister and three charming daughters, and a bright young lady visitor, had joined our own company for the expedition. Together we surveyed the scene of our boyish peril. Then, with the exception of a few small shrubs here and there, the sides of the ravine were bare. Now the whole valley has been planted with larch, grown into goodly trees, and the precipice up which we climbed is green with foliage. It did not look so very dangerous after

all. I felt as young and as youthful as ever. I said, "I will try it again." I clambered up a hundred feet or so, to a jutting rock where some of the young folk had preceded me, and I was bent on mounting still higher, but they dragged me back by the tail of my coat. Not one of them, stout young fellows though they were, would venture higher, nor would they allow me to go. So it happened that half a century ago I was landed on the top by the arms of a coat, and now I was dragged to the bottom by the tail of one. I still think I *could* have done it.

We wandered up the mountain to the top of the ravine, and there, lying on the soft mossy grass, in a lovely spot overlooking the falls, we refreshed ourselves with the good things our host had thoughtfully provided for us. An Arcadian banquet, as I ventured to suggest to our young lady visitor. "Yes," says she, "it's all very well, but I wonder if they had any of these stinging things in Arcadia." She had been sitting on an ant mound.

Then we climbed to the highest point of the mountain, from whence fourteen counties are to be seen. Far off in the dim west Plinlimmon (gloomy mother of "The Wye" and "The Severn") bounded the view. In the opposite direction Titterstone, Caradoc, the Wrekin, and the Malvern Hills could be descried. The whole of this mountain, though looking quite bare at a distance, is covered with soft miniature wortleberry bushes (or wimberries, as they call them here). The fruit was ripe and plentiful, and there were scores of children dotted here and there on the mountain side gathering them. We

instituted a series of rolling races—stakes, a penny for each starter, and sixpence for the winner ; and fine fun the boys had, rolling down the mountain side over the soft velvety bushes.





LETTER No. IX.

“ANGLING SKETCHES.” BY ANDREW LANG.

December 5, 1891.

BY a fortunate chance I have just had the opportunity of reading these sketches, a book after my own heart, and I am constrained to send you a little gossip about it. Of all the men and women who have angled, or who have written about fishing, from Job to Dame Juliana, to Izaak Walton and the Editor of the “F. G.,” there are only two to be found who have had the courage of their inmost convictions to boldly pronounce themselves “Duffers.” Of these two men, one is the writer of these lines, who was the first to make this confession in print, and the second is the writer of this book.

I have mentioned Job. I don't suppose that he was the first angler, by any means (for fishing is native to the human race), but undoubtedly he was an ardent fisherman. Many a time and oft did he wander with pole and cord and iron hook by the side of those lovely streams in the land of Uz (wherever that land may be), fishing for leviathans, for there were giants of fish in those days, but it is not recorded that he ever caught

one. His many comforting friends would call him a Duffer as they saw him sitting under a canopy of wild roses and sweet-scented oleanders patiently baiting his hook. It was in those early days, and by those dreamy streams, where, for ever fishing and never catching, he learnt so well that invaluable lesson of *patience*, which in the subsequent evil days stood him in good stead when his adversaries derided and laughed at him. Then it was that in bitterness he cried, "O that mine adversary had written a book!" In that case he says, "I would bind it as a crown to me." A modern critic would have said, "Wouldn't I slate him!"

Many a "Duffer" has written books about angling since those days, and now, last of all, comes Andrew Lang, proudly wearing on his front "*The Confessions of a Duffer*." I do not regard him as mine adversary for having done it. I would, indeed, be proud to call him my friend; like Job, "I would bind his book as a crown to me." So far, indeed, as the Confessional is concerned, I claim him as my brother. "Arcades Ambo," "contented Duffers both." But if my friend is not, or pretends not to be, an expert with the rod, he is a giant with the pen, and, consequently, what a delightful book he has written. "Success with pen" he has long since achieved in every department of literature. There he is far out of my humble reach, but I am with him heart and soul when he says, "Success with rod may be beyond one, but there is the pleasure of the pursuit, the rapture of endeavour, the delight of an impossible chase, the joys of Nature—sky, trees, brooks, and birds."

But what right have I any longer to call myself

even a Duffer in the gentle art? It is thirty long months since I last attempted to cast a fly upon the water, and scarcely six times have I done so in the last six years. Now, alas! alas! the years roll on: the grasshopper—though excellent bait, as I found in the Rocky Mountains—is gradually becoming a burden. Now, I fear me much, the continued wielding of a ten-foot rod would soon bring me to rheumatic grief. I remember well how, in the days of my boyhood,—and this chapter, called “My Border Boyhood,” helps me to recall them,—my own wanderings by a lovely river, through green woods and bosky dells, with supple rod and dainty killing flies, furnished to me by an old gamekeeper; the ardour with which I thrashed the stream; the rapture of endeavour; the excitement of a rise—always ending in blank failure. How I used to envy that old keeper; the deftness with which he would throw my line across the wide stream, in the teeth of the wind, and right into the mouth of a big trout, just to show me how to do it! How I envied that great lubberly lout, Jack Brunt, who would hide himself up in the thick foliage of an orle (or alder) bush overhanging a deep pool, and with a short stick, two yards of gut, and a bluebottle on his hook, which he *bobbed* gently on and off the water, would pull out half a dozen big fat trout in no time. I could never do it, though many a time I’ve tried to imitate the inimitable Jack; but Jack had a knack—a quick eye, a rapid wrist, and immeasurable patience. I think I am sadly lacking in the last of these qualifications, which is the real cause of my lucklessness. The truth is that I, too, like A. L., am a born angler. I possess the instinct,

but the skill is wanting. Here, I think, heredity comes in: somewhere in the remote past I had an ancestor who possessed both skill and instinct—the instinct was born again with me—the skill passed me by, and both have descended to Piscator Major. Thus it comes about that, like the enthusiastic writer of this lovely book, "my labours are devoted to fishing rather than the catching of fish."

But why pursue the subject? Have I not elsewhere told the story of my failures? Let us return from this digression to our book.

Our author's story of his "Border Boyhood" has led me astray. This naughty boy dreamed of catching a trout, and often thought of him in church. In a moment of profane confidence his younger brother asked, "What do *you* do in sermon time?" "I," said he, "tell stories to myself about catching trout!"

By the time I have got to the end of this boyhood chapter, I begin to perceive that my author has deceived me: we are no longer brethren: he is no such a Duffer, after all: he knows what's what, and is "up to snuff" in all manner of angling matters. During those boyish days on the Ettrick, the Tweed, the Leader, and the Yarrow, and the Lowland burns, he rapidly develops into a skilled fisherman, and it does one good to read so pleasant a story of boyhood. "These," says he, "are the waters with which our boyhood was mainly engaged; it is a pleasure to number and name them. Memory brings vividly back the golden summer evenings by 'Tweedside,' when the trout began to plash in the stillness; brings back the long, lounging, solitary days beneath the woods of

Ashiesteil—days so lonely, that they sometimes in the end begat a superstitious eeriness. One seemed forsaken in an enchanted world. . . . They are all gone now, the old allies and tutors in the angler's art ; the kind gardener, who baited our hooks ; the good Scotch judge, who took us with him on his salmon-fishing expeditions, and made men of us, with real rods and 'pirns' of ancient make. The companions of those days are scattered. . . . But the scene is very little altered, and one is a boy again, in heart, beneath the elms of Yair, or by the gulleets at Ashiesteil. However bad the sport, it keeps you young, or makes you young again ; and you needn't follow Ponce de Léon to the western wilderness, when, in any river you knew of yore, you can find 'The Fountain of Life.' ”

In the following chapters the author has become a man, and has put away boyish things ; henceforth he discourses wisely of all that pertains to the angler's art on Loch Awe, Loch Beg, and Loch Leven, and he gracefully seasons the serious part of his discourse with some lively stories of murder and tragedy pertaining to these lochs, together with old-world legends, gathered once more and afresh from the mouth of his faithful boatman, a Highlander (or Lowlander), by the way, who never says “whateffer.” This important word has been discussed before, I think, in the columns of the “F. G.” ; it may not be high Scotch nor low Scotch, but scores of times have I heard a Welshman say, “It's a fine day, whateffer !”

It pleases me to find that my “contented” friend is “no salmon fisher”—so he modestly says—but then he discourses as pleasantly and as learnedly on salmon

flies and salmon fishing as he does on any other subject ; whatsoever he touches, he adorns. He prefers trout fishing—so do I—but then I never fished for salmon, I never even saw a salmon caught. I remember—it is many months ago—the last time I ever went a-fishing, it was on a lovely curve of the beautiful Herefordshire Wye. I was casting my fly along the fringes of a wide, deep pool, in the careless hope of catching here and there a small trout, or perchance a lively perch or minnow. When suddenly there came up from the great depths of the pool a lordly salmon. A thundering splash, and I caught a glimpse of the "purple and azure" as he flopped down—a forty-pounder if an ounce. I shouted to the Major, who hastily made some artful but futile casts, and that is the beginning and the end of my salmon adventures. I may here say that I never go a-fishing without the Major. I try his wonderful patience a great deal ; when I am dry-fly fishing I have a way of swishing off my flies in trying to dry them, to say nothing of constantly getting caught in the opposite bank, or in a tree ; or else I leave my flies a mile or two behind me, stuck fast in thistle or grass, whilst I have steadily fished on, unconscious of my loss. The Major always comes to my aid and puts me right for a fresh start ; in fact I could never fish at all, but for his ever-ready help at hand.

All this is neither here nor there ; let us get back to our book.

There is a delightful chapter called "A Tweedside Sketch," which tells the tragic story of how this truthful narrator hooked and lost his first and second

salmon—which whoever wants to know more about must buy the book. To my mind the chief of the many charms of this volume is its artless (*ars celare artem*) transparent truthfulness; and where is the other writer (except myself, be it modestly said) whoever dreams of telling of his defeats and failures? In justification of my own apparent boasting in thus linking my own small efforts with his, I may say that, if I had *not* told the truthful story of my many failures, I might have cried, with Canning's knife-grinder. "Story? God bless you, I have none to tell, Sir!"

There are many gems and nuggets in this book, which I have not in this rambling gossip even hinted at; and perhaps not the least thing to be admired about it is the pretty way in which it has been produced. There are a lot of characteristic little wood-cuts, and quite a number of full-page wood-cuts, and three most charming etchings by Mr. W. G. Burn-Murdoch. This is a book which no gentleman's or angler's library (the terms are synonymous) should be without.





LETTER No. X.

A DAY OR TWO ON THE ITCHEN.

June 4, 1892.



NCE again, after an absence of three years from the waterside, I started with "Piscator Major" on Saturday morning, the 28th—a bright smiling May day—for our favourite haunt, the Doctor's lovely bit of *The Itchen*. It was a brilliant, I may say a broiling morning, and sitting on the sunny side—back to the engine—in a full carriage made one rather uncomfortable. Arrived at the old farmhouse, where, as in other days, we found pleasant lodgings, we were not long in paying a preliminary visit to the bridge and the banks of our river. The weather had completely changed—a bright scorching morning was succeeded by a cloudy and windy afternoon. Not a fly on the water, and the river might have been empty of fish for any sign of them that could be seen or heard. An occasional weak-winged May fly was seen blown about in the air by the same stiff breeze which scudded over and rippled and frizzled the smooth surface of the water.

My usual luck when I go a-fishing seemed to have accompanied me this time. Ill-luck, I call it, considering that my opportunities are so rare, that, starting with a morning so full of promise, I should fall upon an afternoon like this. I did not mind the lowering clouds ; but how can one begin to fish with a cheerful mind in half a gale of wind ? The heat of the morning had induced me to go to the river clad in light summer clothing, and there I shivered along the banks, making an occasional ineffective cast over what, in the breeze-driven water, looked like a rise. How discouraging it is to have a fair straight cast over a rising trout caught up by a sudden furious blast and your flies carried yards away from their true destination ! Once only in that, my first, afternoon's fishing, did I hook a large trout. I was standing on a bridge, and throwing down stream I came upon a rising trout close up against a patch of weeds. It was a good cast, though I say it who shouldn't, and it was no disgrace to me that in the fixed position I was, it was not possible to prevent him dashing round into the weeds and divesting himself of the curious prickly tugging thing which he had mistaken for an innocent insect. I lost him—my usual luck. That was the only rise I had. "Piscator" did not fare much better ; the only difference between us was that he hooked only one trout, but then he caught him. He could not reasonably crow over me. Had I been in his easy place and he in my difficult one, the triumph, such as it was, would have been mine, not his.

Even Piscator's enthusiasm was reduced by this morose aspect of the weather. We went home to

dinner—cheered somewhat by the hope that the vigour of the wind would lessen as the sun went down.

After dinner we sallied forth again. This time I went out only to have a look at the water—without my rod, and still in light clothing and garden slippers. The wind was still raging furiously; but Piscator came forth like a lion refreshed in a combination of high wading boots and leggings. I followed as his humble henchman, carrying the net; but I shunned the basket, light as it was, when we started. It was seven o'clock when we commenced operations at the bottom of our water. For a few minutes I sat under the milk-white thorn, which now sweetly "scents the evening gale" and overshadows the Doctor's pleasant fishing hut.

Piscator saw a rise in the deep pool a few yards up stream. He dropped on one knee and his flies went singing and swishing through the air till the right moment arrived to drop them—in spite of the wind—just a yard above to float down over the fish. I hear a splash. I rush up with the net—the rod is bending gracefully—the fish fights steadily against his destiny—but gradually approaches my net and finally gasps his last breath on the green grass. He is a splendid trout of 2 lb.

Another rise—across the water a little higher up. The Major's eye is upon him, and his unerring fly is over him. Down he goes—a tremendous rush and splash!

"It's a grayling, I'm afraid," says Piscator.

A grayling it turned out to be; and who after this will tell me that a grayling is a "deadhearted" fish? Cotton was wrong in giving him so cowardly a character.

This grayling was as plucky as ever was a trout—he came to grass weighing at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

Now, as a faithful narrator, I have to tell a melancholy story.

Says the Major, "He must go back to the water."

"What for?" said I. "What has he done? He's a regular beauty—fat and plump."

"Out of season," said this quixotic angler. "Grayling spawn in April and this is only May."

And back to the Itchen goes this beautiful, sweet-smelling, thymy-scented fish.

"And much good you've done by your absurd quixotism," cried I; "see him yonder, floating on his back as dead as a red-herring."

It was not quite so bad as that. Presently he began to wriggle, and at length turned over, and darted off as if there was nothing the matter with him.

"Don't tell the Doctor," said the Major. "He doesn't like grayling put back—thinks there are too many in the water."

"Not tell the Doctor?" said I in a rage. "I'll proclaim it to the world that Piscator Major is bereft of his senses. This is May 28, and this fish may have spawned two months ago."

I made such a row about it that, although in a few minutes more two more fighting grayling—as big and as fat as the one that had so unwisely been restored to life and liberty—came to grass, they will never more see their native element. I took care of that.

Once before in my Old Dovedale days had I to record the fact that the Major's high respect for the written or unwritten laws of sport had led him into the folly

of returning a grayling to the water simply, forsooth ! because he had hooked him accidentally by a fin instead of the gullet. For my own part, I say frankly I don't understand this sort of thing. I throw my fly in a legitimate and sportsmanlike manner ; and if ever anything comes up at the end of it worthy of being consigned to my basket, into that basket it goes. Of course by this I do not mean it to be thought that I would bag a growing and undersized trout or salmon.

I have perhaps devoted too much space to this grayling matter. Now let me give the Major his due—he went on splendidly fishing whilst I shivered in the cutting wind. I dreaded a severe cold, and already had incipient touches of lumbago through my foolhardiness in loafing about in that wind ; but I was fascinated by the sport that was going on. In order to get up circulation I took to leaping backwards and forwards over five-foot ditches in the intervals when I was not wanted with the landing-net. This was good exercise for an old man, many years in advance of the “grand climacteric,” and so I staved off the lumbago and the cold. With regard to this evening's work I will only add that the basket which went to the water so lightly came back on the Major's shoulders weighing over 14½ lb., and enclosing five brace of as fine trout (including the one brace of grayling), as often falls to the luck of one angler. Especially when it is remembered that they were all caught between seven and half-past eight, at which time the young crescent moon, and brilliant Venus were gliding in and out behind the drifting clouds, thus reminding the conscientious Major that the hour was approaching at which it

would be "unsportsmanlike to fish." I think I ought to add that these fine fish were all killed within a space of fifty yards. The Major took them, "one down and another come on." The fly he used was a small "Alder"; he lost a quarter of an hour in trying a "May fly," which they would not look at.

Sunday morning was bright and genial. We are staying in a land where churches are scarce; it is two miles to the nearest.

We walked over to that nearest one, and we cast, not a rod, but a long, lingering look, over the bridge as we passed, for the May flies were coming up slowly and intermittently, and as they came sailing down the stream every one of them was greedily taken. In the afternoon we wandered down stream to the end of our tether; the stream was alive with rising fish. I think I would rather be in the wake of the May fly than in the midst of them; now they are only coming up fitfully, just sufficient to whet appetite without impairing digestion. It is probable that they will not be up in earnest till the end of the week, meanwhile the Alder, the Governor, and perhaps the female March Brown are the flies that will be taken for the next day or two. A pleasant afternoon it was, the woods and hedgerows alive with the melody of birds. We sat on a bench beneath the blooming white hawthorn that stands in front of our fishing hut, *Piscatoribus Sacrum*, in the corner of the beautiful meadow which forms the limit of our fishing estate, "and pored upon the brook that babbled by."

It would be needless for me, and useless as well, to reveal the locality of our retreat. Its beauty consists

largely of its modest privacy and the fact that it is far away from "the madding crowd's ignoble strife." Here we sat till the shades of evening came over us, watching the playful trout, and sadly we thought of the morrow. For we had ordered a trap to come from the neighbouring town to carry us away to chains and slavery at ten a.m. precisely. But on that contemplative bench a bright thought occurred to the Major and myself simultaneously : Why not telegraph home, "Detained on important business," and stop that trap till Tuesday? The proposal was carried with perfect unanimity. We won't go home till Tuesday. That being settled, we can now contemplate the morrow, not sadly, but gladly.

Monday, May 30, broke upon us with brightness and beauty all its own ; and, like mitching school-boys, we revelled in the delight of having cut ourselves off from the path of duty by stopping that postboy. Breakfast at eight, and I was the first to start for the water. Just above the bridge I saw a small circle in the water, and I knew what it meant. I managed a nice cast a foot above on the outer rim of the circle the trout had made. He came to grass rather smaller than I expected, being only $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. He fought well and died game. I was alone, for my old boy Davis (now in his eightieth year) had not arrived, and the Major was still equipping himself. I was rather glad, because if Davis had been there he would have said, "I put you on to a good fish there, sir." This old chap has a disagreeable way of taking all the credit to himself for every fish I catch, and giving me credit for every one I lose. This was a satisfactory

beginning. I fished on down stream, but always casting up stream, for in this bright water, and amongst these highly-educated trout it is perfectly useless to cast a snare in their faces. You must take them behind their backs, and where neither your body nor your shadow can be seen, or you may as well cast your fly up a tree.

The morning proved a very hot one—too hot and too bright to lead us to expect much success till the evening. It happens that I have a splendid little 10 ft. rod, made by Kirker, of Belfast (green-heart, with flexible ferrules). With it, in decent weather, I can throw my fly with tolerable accuracy. I saw one of those peculiar silent rises which leaves but small ripples on the deep water, which indicates a fish of respectable dimensions. He was near a tuft of weeds on the opposite bank, in a deep-running stream. I placed my fly a foot above him. He took the lure, and was off like a dart—now up, now down, now across to my side, then away he went again, never showing his colour above the water, till at last, exhausted by the gallant struggle for life and liberty, he walked straight into the net. He was pronounced to be 2½ lb. ; but in the scales he barely over-balanced the 2 lb. weight. I was proud—I may say elated with my success—for up to that time the Major had met with little success. Subsequently I hooked and lost two fish, apparently as weighty as the one I had in the basket. During lunch-time in the hut, I tried my hand at some big fish rising behind the hut, under overhanging oak trees, which almost touched the water. I failed to reach them, after many efforts and

frequent hangings-up in the trees overhead. The Major took my rod, and, with his usual skill, steered clear of tree and overhanging branch, and came straight down upon a big fish, hooked him, and he was safely landed. To the Major's annoyance he proved to be a grayling, but of such portly dimensions, that, unhesitatingly, he went into my basket. He weighed slightly over 2 lb. I claimed him as mine.

After lunch, and till six o'clock, I caught nothing. Between seven and nine I caught a brace of small half-pound grayling, and one half-pound trout, and so my fishing ended.

The Major on this occasion was not quite as successful as he might have been. He lost better fish than he caught. On one occasion, when I was a hundred yards away, I heard and saw a tremendous splashing in the water; I never saw anything like it before. I ran up to see what was the matter. I thought a calf, or something as big, had tumbled into the deep pool. I only discovered my error when I saw the Major's rod bending double, and he, as cool as a cucumber, humouring a great fish in a manner which ought to have been quite to his satisfaction, till at length he was coming pleasantly and steadily up to bank when he caught sight of that ominous net; then he renewed his giant strength, made a sudden dash, the cartilage of his lip by which he had been so long held, parted, and the Major's fly dangled uselessly in the air. It was a sight to make one weep. Useless it is to speculate on his weight. At a very moderate estimate he weighed $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb., and pity it is we could not scale him. He was one of "the Doctor's patients,"

thoroughly educated. Many a time for years past had the Doctor's rod been over him, but never before had he been so near his doom. The Major's basket contained only three brace of trout, scaling 7 lb; whilst my basket held, besides the big grayling, my 2-lb. trout and a brace of small grayling (which of course I bagged) and a half-pound trout, weighing together $5\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. The net result of our fishing on Saturday evening and Monday's (all day) work was about 25 lb. of good fish. This is without counting the big grayling, and several smaller ones, which owed their lives to the Major's unreasonable scruples.

My old boy, who carried my basket and was always alert to a rising fish and ready with the net, says he "don't hold with drunkenness, neither do he hold with teetotalism," and so was ever ready for a nip of whisky when the exhausting nature of our work in a broiling sun seemed to demand it.

Monday, May 30, was a lovely day. The evening closed in with a brilliant display of falling meteors and sheet lightning on the southern horizon. It was the Major's birthday—a happy day, long to be remembered by us both.





LETTER No. XI.

THE ITCHEN REVISITED.



ISTORY repeats itself. One day's fishing does not always resemble another ; but in its main features, Saturday, June 4, was as like Saturday, May 28, so far as we, Piscator and I, are concerned as could reasonably be expected. We travelled to the same place by the same train, had the same hot sun and baking in the train. We had the same kind of disagreeable afternoon, only a little colder and rougher, and we caught fifteen fish, weighing exactly 15 lb., which beat last Saturday's record by only half a pound.

These are the general outlines, and I know not why I should descend to particulars—for the catching of one trout very much resembles the catching of another trout, and the difference between the exploits of an expert and a mere *amateur* (or “Duffer” as he is sometimes called), has been sufficiently exhibited in my last letter.

It had been foretold by the knowing ones—indeed, I foreshadowed it myself last week—that by the end

of the week (June 4) the May fly would be *up* in his glory. He was *up* on Saturday, but only fitfully; there was none of that delightful dancing up and down in the sun by clouds of these happy insects which one usually associates with the exciting news, "The May fly is up."

We had but intermittent gleams of sunshine, whilst the wind was constant, and the pretty flies were sadly tossed about by sudden gusts and steady blowing. It was easy to fancy that they did not enjoy this new world into which Nature had so suddenly shot them from their old mud homes in the river's bed. It seemed as if, when they had been stripped of their larvæ clothing, and their wings had unwillingly wafted them into the air, they longed to get back to their native earth; and so down they came again to the surface of the water, and tried to penetrate it, and get back to their snug berths at the bottom; then it was that most of them found a last resting-place in the maw of a greedy trout. It is not always thus—for on a bright, calm, sunny afternoon who so happy as these myriads of short-lived *Ephemera*, dancing and singing their nuptial songs, quite unconscious of impending fate. True it is that their music is inaudible to mortal ears; but on a calm evening one can distinctly hear the rustle of their filmy wings.

Without going into detail too minutely—for it is unfair, not to say invidious, to be always comparing a mere amateur's earnest but sometimes fruitless efforts with the trained skill of an expert—it may be said that the fifteen fish were caught before dinner (not after, as on the previous Saturday), and the major

portion may naturally be attributed to the Major's rod.

They had already tasted of the sweetness and delicacy of the May fly, and no other fly would tempt them.

We fished with a comparatively new pattern of fly, and some of your readers will not be surprised at our success when they are told that it goes by the name of the *G.O.M.*

One remarkable fact in connection with this singular fly is that whilst many big trout, and grayling too, seized it with avidity and swallowed it whole as the sweetest morsel that ever passed their gullets, others of equal taste and culture avoided it as something uncanny and not to be trusted. These highly-educated fish have their likes and dislikes the same as politicians of a biped race.

Of the fifteen fish caught it need only be noted that five brace came out of the Major's basket and two and a half out of mine.

It may be taken as an axiom that when the natural fly floats gracefully on the water, as the May fly mostly does (even when the wind is boisterous), it is needless to expect a drowned artificial to be taken. Your fly must float easily and lightly down over the fish that has just swallowed the swan-like "May." After dinner we sallied forth again, and the weather gave us ample opportunity of testing this question. It was really a terrific evening; the rain came down in torrents, driven slantingly across the water by the wind. Few May flies to be seen, and only occasional rises. How to keep my "Gladstone" dry and set him jauntily on the water was the labour of the evening,

for more often would he sink than swim. I caught but half a brace of trout and lost a brace ; the Major landed only a two-pound grayling—which was kept, because (as already mentioned) the river here is far too full of them ; perhaps a flimsy excuse.

We returned home about dusk, taught by a new experience that there is no knowing when fish will rise and when they won't. I presented the appearance of an exhausted and shipwrecked mariner ; Davis—who did not much like the job of fooling along in the pouring rain and long wet grass, foretold with absolute certainty that there would be no more fish up to-night—looked very much like a drowned old rat ; the Major said he was certain they would be up by-and-by ; and I could only echo "let's try."

Thus it happened that we only added $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to our store, equal to $17\frac{1}{2}$ lb. for the day. The foolish question now arose, what on earth shall we do with all these fish ? We might have considered this question before we began. We two anglers cannot, by any amount of gormandizing, eat 17 lb. of fish, and we cannot send them away to our friends. We are three miles away from any station, and, even if we could get them there, goodness knows when they would reach their destination. Sunday being followed by Bank Holiday, they may or may not be delivered on Wednesday, by which time they would not be very acceptable presents. Fortunately, our hostess has a fine young family, and they easily solved the difficulty. It rained steadily all night, and Sunday morning was so blustering, wet, and cheerless, that we were grateful to our hostess for giving us a cheerful wood fire.

Sunday afternoon was the perfection of beauty. We strolled down to the water to see how the grey and green drakes were (as the male and female May fly are sometimes indiscriminately called). Our farmer host possesses about 150 ducks and geese. On the side stream (a branch from the Itchen, which surrounds his pastures) we found that ducks as well as men are fond of May-fly fishing. They occupied the whole width of the stream. Sailing up, they rushed at every unlucky May fly, whilst another detachment lined the sides of the water, and picked the unfortunate insects off the sedge bottoms. No wonder there were no rises to be seen there; the surface of the stream was swept clean. Ducks and geese and fish are not the only enemies that these little ethereal beings have to contend with during their pilgrimage in the upper world. Sparrows consume them greedily. I watched a laborious starling pegging away at them on the river-bank. He did not swallow them; he stored them away in his beak till it would hold no more. Judging by the time it took him to perform this close packing, and the way his mouth was extended and the package bulged out on each side his cheeks, there must have been a score or two of mangled and compressed May flies in his bale. When he had a sufficient load, he flew off to his nest, away off in the woods. Half an hour afterwards he was back again packing another bale as industriously as ever. Another enemy of the poor May fly is the brutal dragon fly. I heard a fizzling in the grass, and, stooping down, I saw one murdering a May fly. This dragon fly is, to my thinking, as great

a nuisance on land as he is in the larva state in the water, where he has a bad reputation as a worker of evil amongst the eggs and young fry of fish. I was surprised to notice that swifts and swallows did not seem to care about them; they avoided the places where the May fly swarmed.

Whit Monday must have been an ideal day for holiday makers; and if anglers in general fared as well as Piscator Major, it may be marked as a red-letter day for them.

As a faithful recorder of our fishing adventures, I am constrained to confess the "Amateur Angler" did not distinguish himself. Only a solitary grayling weighing $1\frac{3}{4}$ lb. came to his enticement. The heat of the sun was terrible; the May fly were up in clouds on the meadows all day, but they made but small appearance on the river during the whole day. Unluckily for me I fished with an old-fashioned Grey Drake pattern all day, and so did the Major in the morning; before lunch he was only rewarded with a brace of trout. We parted company till dinner-time, and when we met I told him they would not look at my lovely floating May fly. "Of course not," said he; "you should have used the G.O.M." That was the fly he had used all the afternoon and evening, and with it he bagged during the whole day over 23 lb. of splendid fish—of these, one brace of grayling weighing $3\frac{1}{4}$ lb.; three and a half brace of trout weighing 8 lb. came to grass between seven and nine o'clock. Of course I was disappointed with my own luck, for I had not a Gladstone in my book. I did not fish in the evening. I preferred to take it easy, and watch the

dogged perseverance of the Major. A most lovely evening it was. The setting sun over the green woods—the silvery shimmer on the calm water—its calmness only broken now and then by the flop of a big trout or grayling, and the Major's line singing and swishing over them. Another flop, and then a splash and a dash, and general commotion in the water, till the flopper rode steadily into the net, and so it went on till the setting sun was succeeded by the risen moon. It was a pleasant scene, and one to be remembered.

To countrymen and skilled anglers scenes and successes such as these which I have tried to picture are doubtless common, and seem commonplace enough, but to me and such as me "in city pent," to whom the opportunity of witnessing and participating in such unwonted success is so rare, the pleasure is so much the greater.

I think, however, I may with all modesty say that from any point of view our record is not one of everyday occurrence, seeing that two evenings and two whole days resulted in a net weight of splendid fish amounting to about *sixty-five pounds*. Something must be allowed to good luck or chance for this success, something to unerring skill, and very much to indomitable perseverance and hard work.

Tuesday morning broke upon us at the riverside with all the promise of a glorious day. The Major was uneasy: he knew the trap was coming at ten a.m. to convey us away from these pleasant quarters—he wanted to send another telegram "important business, etc.," but there was no unanimity on this occasion. The call of duty was imperative; to his delight the

postboy never turned up, and he thought we should escape ; but at the very last moment the farmer rigged up his horse and trap, and galloped us into the station just in time to catch our train ; and so perhaps for many weeks we leave our delightful strip of water in peace. We had anticipated the pleasure of having the Doctor with us on this last occasion ; how he would have revelled amongst these trout and grayling ! His joyful presence and exuberant fun would have caused our cup of pleasure to pour over ; but other engagements at the last moment prevented his coming, although he had for weeks been in a great state of excitement about this May-fly time—which as it happened we had all to ourselves.



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TENBY.



LETTER No. XII.

MY HOLIDAY IN WALES.—NO. I.

July 21, 1892.



WHEN one is holiday making it is a pleasant thing to drop suddenly and unexpectedly into a place of surpassing beauty. It was the toss up of a sixpence that brought me to the south-eastern corner of Pembrokeshire, where nestles on the shores of the Bay of Carmarthen the curious little town of Tenby. It seems, from my first glimpse of it, to be situated on a small promontory, on the extreme point of which are the ruins of Tenby Castle. This castle hill is a very pleasant spot. Tenby was, in days gone by, a strongly-fortified little town, and the walls, where they have not been battered about the ears of the inhabitants by Cromwellian or other foes, are very picturesque, particularly some of the round and square embattled towers and gateways. As the castle hill forms the apex of the promontory, it will be seen at once that the town, situated on its neck, faces two ways. There is a south-west front, looking over toward Caldy Island and the sand-hills and rugged rock-bound coast of Penally, as far as

Giltar Point, and a north-east front, commanding a charming view of the easternmost point of Pembroke-shire and the coasts of Carmarthen and Glamorgan.

I am inclined to think that each side has its advocates, claiming superior charms for their own point of view. There is, on the south side, a wide and far-extending sandy beach, pleasant and firm under foot, and forming excellent ground for a gallop of a mile or two.

The north side overlooks the small pier and docks, sometimes closely packed with hundreds of fishing boats. Both sides not unfrequently know the force of a south-westerly gale ; hitherto I have only seen a placid smooth surface, sometimes gently rippled by a breeze. In some parts the castle wall is very perfect, embracing for a considerable distance the old front of the little town. Walking along the outside of this vigorous, pagan-looking old wall, one is carried back to the stirring fighting times of old ; but, looking in at any of the numerous portals pierced through the thick walls brings one back at once from the dead old times into the midst of a living and less warlike generation.

An old friend and correspondent of the "F. G.," Mr. F. S. P., met us at the station, and provided for us most comfortable lodgings ; he has taken me for a preliminary canter round his favourite fishing ground. I shall have more to tell of him, I am sure, as the days pass by.

July 22.—A lovely morning, but not good for fishing ; so we started for a drive to Manorbier Castle, a remarkably perfect old ruin, three and a half

miles away. It is partly inhabited by the owner. A young lady of the family, who must be of a very poetic and romantic turn of mind, has taken up her quarters in one of the old towers, and consequently has to cross the green quadrangle every night when she returns to her eyrie nest. A fine old deerhound accompanies and protects her from ghost or goblin in her midnight flitting across the weird fairy-haunted green.

It is one of the most picturesque ruins I have seen, owing mainly to its interesting position, looking out to sea from an alcove or indent in the hilly country, called Manorbier Bay (query *Manorbier*).¹

Driving or walking, the little excursion is a most interesting one. The drive over the Ridgeway commands fine views to seaward on the one side, and the wide valley, with St. Florence nestling in the midst of it, on the other. Its hedgerows are full of wild flowers, and the number of small birds that one sees flitting in and out is surprising—finches, golden, bull, and pie, gold-crested wrens, yellow-hammers, titlarks, white-throats, black-caps, thrushes, blackbirds—all keep up the interest of the drive.

July 25.—Monday: Our mutual friend P. brought us a lovely bouquet from his garden. I find that he is not merely an angler, which alone would justify my mentioning him here, he is an enthusiastic rose grower, a conchologist, a pisciculturist, a general lover of nature, writes poetry of the heroic type—poetry

¹ The origin and spelling of this word are uncertain. These Ingoldsby lines may explain both spellings:

“When once a man’s dead, there’s no more to be said;
Peter’s beer with an *e* was his bier with an *i*.”

which, if published, would probably not sell, but might entitle him to be brought within the respectable pale of Mr. H. D. Traill's *Minor Poets*. His collection of land shells, every one of which he has picked up himself from the hedgerows, includes about fifty distinct varieties, and is quite unique.

This genial and lively companion pointed out to me the best spot down amongst the rocks and boulders for bass fishing. "Here," says he, "I landed five big bass one early morning before the town was awake; they require some catching, I assure you; the bass is a remarkably shy fish."

This Monday morning, the beginning of another brilliant day, we started, P. and I, for a four or five mile walk to the celebrated Lydstep Caverns, a pleasant walk which took us through the pretty village of Penally, and so across the fields to Lydstep Haven. These caverns can only be seen for a brief period, and it is only at the time of spring tides, when the water rises highest and falls lowest, that these remarkable caverns can be visited. I shall not attempt a description of them, but will only say that for rugged grandeur they are well worth going a long way to see. There are three principal ones, the largest being the one on the right as you descend the rocky ravine from the hill above. You enter it from the shore. It forms a vast hall, with a lofty, irregular, dome-shaped rugged roof of jagged and pointed limestone. In the very centre of the hall is an enormous throne, on which, in the good days of old, Gog or Magog, or both, may have sat—ages before they became the tutelary deities of the good citizens of London.

Here Neptune might have spent an occasional holiday. It is a giant's cave, and woe betide the poor puny modern mortal who worships too long or drinks too much beer in this extraordinary cavity, for Neptune's furies, returning with every quickly rising tide, will dash him to the roof, and send his mangled body to feed the fishes.

My guide, philosopher, and friend, after poking about for some time in the rocky holes at the foot of the cliffs, in the hope that peradventure a belated lobster, or infuriated crab, might fasten on to the end of his stick, but without success, advised our retreat in good time to be free from catastrophe.

It was a blazing morning, occasionally tempered by cool breezes from the sea. We climbed back over the slippery boulders and up the hill, by which* time my feet, unaccustomed to anything more rugged than Fleet Street, began to grow tender, and I was glad when we reached the village inn at Lydstep. At present this inn is called "The Quarry Inn," but the landlord has some thought of changing its title to the far more appropriate one of "The Caverns Inn"; perhaps in time it may grow into "The Caverns Hotel," or "The Caverns Tavern."

Here, wearied and footsore, we sat down and gratefully consumed a glass of what, to our thirsty palates, seemed to be the best ale that ever tickled the throat of a weary wayfarer.

We found our host as pleasant as his beer; a worthy and intelligent Irishman—an old soldier who had drifted to this little corner of Wales from the wars.

On a mantelpiece in the kitchen is the following

curious epitaph, printed in large letters, in an appropriate frame, which cannot fail to attract the attention of customers :

DIED LAST NIGHT, AT AN
ADVANCED AGE, MR. TRUST,
MR. TRUST,
MUCH REGRETED BY ALL HIS FRIENDS
EXCEPT THE LANDLORD.

Our learned host informed us that it contained only one error in spelling, which he asked if I could discover. "The word," said he, "is not to be found in a dictionary, but you are, perhaps, aware that when an active verb ends with a consonant, preceded by a vowel, that consonant is usually doubled in expressing the past tense or the passive form—*ergo*, there should be two *t*'s in regretted."

I was naturally pleased with this information, and gratified to find so much learning hidden away in this little Welsh inn.

It is needless to say that our host is a staunch *Home Ruler*, "but," says he, "I have arrived at my opinion on a theory and principle of my own, with the application of which I could in five minutes knock all the arguments of Mr. Gladstone on the one side, and Mr. Balfour on the other, into a cocked hat."

"For instance," says he, "look at our fisheries. The crying evil and bitter complaint of the Irish fishermen is that their fishing time is closed long

before the English and Scotch fisheries, solely for the purpose of shutting them out from the English market, and for the sole benefit of their English rivals; now, Home Rule will cure all that."

Vain it was to explain to him that the close time on Irish rivers was fixed solely and only with regard to spawning time, and was really in the interest of the fishermen themselves—he would not be convinced; as a boy he had caught salmon and trout all the year round without let or hindrance, and by many curious devices, such as spearing by night by the aid of a turf torchlight. He would like to see those good old times come back, and Home Rule was the thing to bring them back, and, may be too, the three or four millions of good Irish people who had quitted the shores of Ireland since the potato famine, which latter, he implied, was also due to the want of Home Rule.

Our genial friend was also eloquent on the subject of the liquor laws and illicit stills, but that is a ticklish subject to discuss here. At all events he seemed to me to be a very jolly landlord, who had seen many of the ups and downs of life. A sterling old chap, for whom one can heartily wish success to the new "Inn of the Caverns."

Like lions refreshed with the golden nectar to be found in "The Inn of the Caverns," we plodded our homeward way along the edge of the cliffs, past the Proud and Little Giltar to Giltar Point. On the top of these cliffs are some remarkable natural holes, like coal pits, which deep down communicate with the sea by a tunnel, up which in stormy times the sea rushes, sending spray right up through the top.

Returning through Penally, we reached home eventually, I footsore and weary after this ten or twelve-mile walk, my veteran companion still fresh as a young lark, and ready to foot it all over again.

It is a charming walk, and should be taken by every angler who comes to Tenby.

I have still in anticipation the pleasure of being able to record some fishing exploits, but as yet they have to be performed.

July 26.—To-day, as lovely and bright as ever, we took a drive to Carew Castle, on a beautiful road commanding fine views on all sides.

This part of Wales is thickly strewn with the ruins, not only of old castles, but of old houses; in almost every other field one sees the ivy-covered gable ends of old cottages, as if the cottagers had lived in them till the roof tumbled in, and then left the ruins as they fell for other quarters. Some of them seem old enough to have been accidentally tumbled to pieces by stray shots from one of Cromwell's cannons, when he and his Puritan warriors were engaged in suppressing the Welsh "insurgents" (as they were called), and battering down the grand old castles of the insurgent chiefs.

What a lovely picture the ivy-clad towers of Carew Castle make in the landscape; notwithstanding the eleven or twelve feet thickness of its walls, Oliver made a great breach in one of its sides, and left it a splendid ruin. The fine old halls, with their lovely oriel windows, having withstood the crash of cannon and the wrack of time for well-nigh a thousand years, are now slowly but surely crumbling away.

Now its chief inhabitants are the kestrel and sparrow-hawks, that keep watch and ward by day; and the white, grey, and screech owls, that wing their silent flight around it in twilight and moonlight and darkness, whilst doubtless the disembodied spirits of the Old Royalists, who once kept high festival in the grand old banqueting halls, now enliven the midnight hours with ghostly mimicry of their old doings. Our guide, who took us into every nook and corner, from deepest dungeon to highest tower, assured us solemnly that he had never yet seen a ghost, and didn't har'ly believe in 'em.

July 27.—No fishing yet. The fishing smack has not yet brought home the desired ray fish whose liver is to provide the food with which we are to bait our hooks for the bass that are awaiting this illusive feast at the foot of the Castle rocks. Besides, I am just a little bit squeamish about the "four o'clock in the morning" part of the programme, and do not seem much to regret the non-arrival of ray liver on that account. Then, as to inland trout fishing! Yonder is a lovely stream, a few miles off by rail, but the weather is too bright and shining to expect success there yet. So I am off castle-hunting instead.

So novel and delightful do I find everything around me, that I have no time to regret the angling expeditions that are yet to come.





LETTER No. XIII.

MY HOLIDAY IN WALES.—NO. II.

July 27.

PENBY is not only a delightful little place in itself, it is the hub from which radiate delightful drives, or walks, or sails, in every direction. To-day, in our pursuit of old castles, we found our way by train to Pembroke. The station is at one end of the town and the castle at the other. The town, so far as a stranger can judge of it by a stroll through from station to castle, does not impress one with its beauty. It is Welsh to the backbone, and seemed to me to be composed largely of chapels and public-houses. Its chief feature, of course, is the grand old castle. Here are the glorious ruins of one of the oldest fortifications in the country, dating from A.D. 1040. The round tower, or keep, is, externally, in a fine state of preservation. Cromwell battered it in vain, for the walls are fourteen feet thick.

The interior is gutted, and now presents only a hollow vault from dome to bottom ; on one side is a winding staircase to the roof. I made an attempt to climb up this risky spiral, by a rope suspended from

PEMBROKE CASTLE.

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1. The first group of people who are not allowed to enter the country are those who are on the "No Fly List". This list is maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security. It includes individuals who are suspected of being involved in terrorism or other activities that could threaten the national security.

1. *Chlorophyll a* (Chl *a*)

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1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Lichtenthaler and Whistler (1973).

1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Lichtenthal and Whistler (1973).

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"...and I am not alone."

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$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad B = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad C = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad D = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

11. *Chlorophyll *a** and *Chlorophyll *b** were determined by the method of Lichtenthaler and Whistler (1973).

1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Lichtenthaler and Whistler (1973).

$\frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) = \frac{1}{4}$

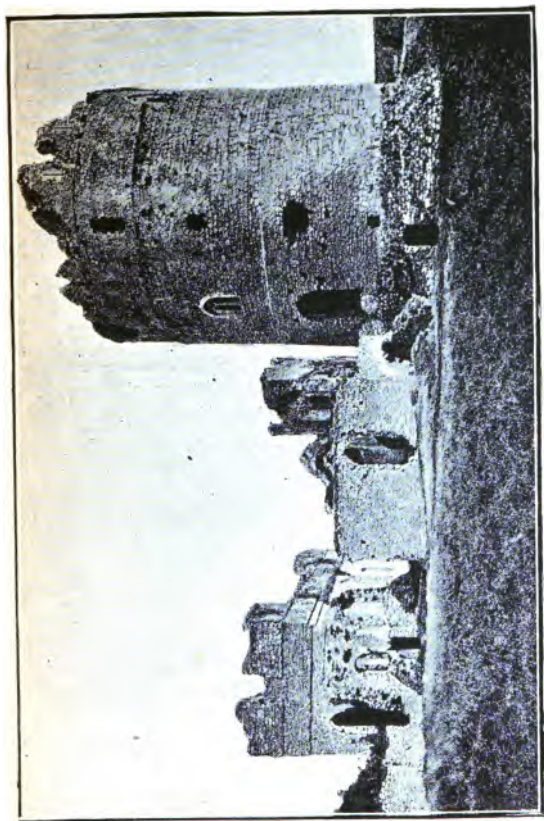
1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1039-1043.

1. $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}^n$ is a vector.

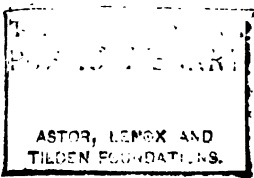
$$f_{\text{max}} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \sqrt{\frac{1}{L_1 C_1} + \frac{1}{L_2 C_2}} \quad (1)$$

1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Arar and Collins (1971).

3. *Conclusions*—The results of this study indicate that the use of a single, low-dose, short-acting benzodiazepine, such as lorazepam, is an effective and safe method of sedation for the conscious patient with severe dental anxiety. The use of a single, low-dose, short-acting benzodiazepine, such as lorazepam, is an effective and safe method of sedation for the conscious patient with severe dental anxiety.



PEMBROKE CASTLE.



the top, but it is a dangerous undertaking, for the steps have nearly all been taken away. They are said to have been very valuable, and are now doubtless to be found in the neighbouring houses. Without the rope the ascent would be absolutely impossible, for nothing now remains for foothold but jagged and irregular crags, a false step on which might send one headlong to the bottom. (I have since been told that the rope is considerably frayed at the top, and may some day give way.) I limited my ascent to half-way up—I ventured no further. The descent is still more difficult. I was pleased when I reached the bottom safely.

The smooth green quadrangle, where young men and maidens play at tennis by day, and ghosts and ghouls play at bowls with ghostly skulls by night, is a pleasant place on a bright day, such as this. One of the prettiest features on this velvet lawn is that *rara avis* a white peacock, which, however, happened to be moulting now, so he had not the usual inducement to show off; his vanity prevented him from spreading his diminished tail. When in full feather he makes a glorious display of his gorgeous white stars.

If my readers want minute descriptions or historical details of such a place as Pembroke Castle, are they not written in the chronicles of the Kings of England? I refer them to the grave historians of the Principality, or to Murray's succinct and practical guide to South Wales. I profess only to record the momentary impressions of half-an-hour's visit.

The philosopher, poet, and piscator, all united in the person of F. S. P., has just rushed in to say that the

boat has arrived, and ray fish, with livers like cod fish, are now to be had, and I must be up at four o'clock to-morrow morning. I half wish them back at the bottom of the sea, and so does our chambermaid; but the fates are inexorable; she has to rattle me up at that unreasonable hour.

July 28.—I needed no sleepy chambermaid to come tapping at my chamber door. I was up and dressed before four o'clock, and when she came it was only in time to let me out into the street.

A lovely morning it was, as usual. Wrapped in water-proofs, and leggings to match, I strode down to the rocks, where my philosopher had appointed to meet me. "I shall be there," said he, "never fear!" but I was first on the spot—it was exactly 4 a.m. A stiff wind was blowing from the exact point where the sun, a great globe of fire, was rising out of the eastern sea, and the rolling waves did not inspire confidence from the bass-fishing point of view. I walked round and round the castle hill, keeping my eye now upon the rocks at the foot of the stone steps, now on the rough boulders facing the fort of St. Catherine. Stillness and perfect peace all round, save the occasional cluck of a gull as he floats over the dock, or the caw of a daw round the castle walls; 4.15 came, 4.30, 5 a.m., but neither poet, philosopher, nor piscator turned up. I looked in vain for that ardent combination. "He cometh not," said I. "I will bid adieu to the risen sun, and go back to bed."

I was on the point of starting to fulfil this resolution when my lagging poet in fishing array turned the corner.

"It's no go!" cried he; "quite useless to unpack; with that sea rolling and dashing against the rocks no fish in his proper senses would come near them. What a pity it is; here we are, tide all right, which it won't be again for a fortnight, ray-fish liver splendid, tackle perfect, and we on the spot; all spoiled by the dashing and the roaring of the sea." But we unpacked—baited our hook in the proper manner. I sat there on the sharp point of a rock for half an hour, patiently attendant on the point of my rod suspended over the boiling water; till at length, sucked in by the drift of an outward current, which swirls round these rocks even when the tide is rolling in, my bait and hook got firmly fixed in the grip of some rocky crevice away down in the depths below. There was nothing for it but to cut our cable, and fasten the end of our line to a hidden rock—and come back for our tackle at low water.

We had taken possession of the best position on these rocks, but, stepping aside for one minute to repair our tackle, a new arrival took this mean advantage of us,—perching himself on my own particular perch before we, intent on our bait, perceived him. We left him alone in his glory.

We were not surprised to find on revisiting the spot that our broken tackle, so securely fastened to the rock, had disappeared. A fellow who could steal our place, from which it was plain we had only temporarily removed five yards for repairs, was of course quite capable of appropriating our tackle.

I went back to my hotel and my bed not wholly disappointed with my morning's adventure. I had

been up in good time to salute the rising sun as he rose from the sea, red and glowing like a furnace. I had seen Tenby asleep. I and P. and that other fellow, the restless gulls floating about aimlessly in the air, and a stray cat, were all the living creatures that were awake in Tenby at that early hour. I had learnt how to catch bass had there been any bass to catch.

Bass-fishing at Tenby is a precarious and uncertain business. Undoubtedly they are to be caught here in goodly numbers at certain seasons—chiefly at spring tides in the early mornings—but these times are only available to local people. Miss one spring tide, or if the weather is too rough, as was my case, and you have to wait a fortnight for another chance. This is not convenient for visitors.

This little morning's adventure was only the beginning of an eventful day. I was up again to breakfast at nine o'clock.

A weak and wizened sort of tootle-tootle, pretending to be a coachman's horn, blown by a boy, on Sam's drag, brought me to the window. "Nice day for a drive, sir," says Sam. "Won't you go to see the birds before they flit?"—"How far?"—"Forty miles there and back."—"How long?"—"About nine hours."—"When do you start?"—"In ten minutes."—"Can I have the box seat?"—"All right."

And so it happened that by ten o'clock we were off to Stackpole Park and the birds.

Our driver, Sam, is a bright young fellow; he knows every inch of the country. When I was comfortably settled by his side, I bethought me about the sustenance of the inner man during the long journey. "Lunch at

Stackpole, I suppose?" said I.—"O yes," says Sam,— "if you've brought it with you."

In our haste we had taken no thought as to what we should eat or what we should drink.

"But is there no hotel or inn at Stackpole?"

"No, sir, Lord Cawdor won't allow a pub. on any part of his estate. There is absolutely nothing in the way of meat and drink on the way out. We shall return through Pembroke about four o'clock, and then you can be refreshed at 'The Lion.'"

I was aware, from our previous day's counting of the Pembroke pubs., that there would be no lack of refreshment there; but then, to broil on the top of a coach from ten till four (five it turned out to be) without bit or drop, wasn't a very lively prospect for us. This, however, was the only drawback to our pleasure.

It was a most lovely day. We had a stout pair of horses that pluckily dragged their load up a long, steep hill on to the Ridgeway. "Where do you change horses?" I asked Sam.—"Change!" said he, "we don't change at all. That blessed horse and mare wouldn't be happy, they'd be miserable if they didn't do this forty-mile run, at least, three days a week, with sixteen or twenty passengers behind 'em. They be seasoned to it, an' they likes it, sir." "Why," said I, "it's real cruelty to animals. Now, your rival is a much better fellow than you; he puts four horses to his drag."—"Do he?" says Sam, with a wink. "Yes, this is what he do. He drives four horses through the town to get a load, and then takes two on 'em off before he starts on the journey. I wouldn't do such a mean thing as that."

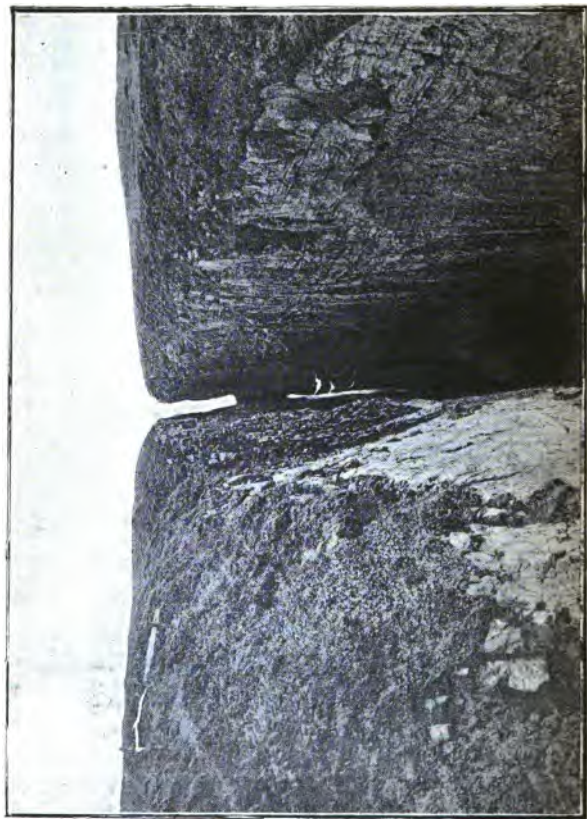
Really on such a day as this it is pleasant to drive along that Ridgeway road, with its fine views over sea and land. We only skirted Pembroke on our outward course.

We passed through a variety of scenery down to Stackpole Park. The Earl of Cawdor is a good and wise man, but he would be neither good nor wise if he kept all this loveliness to himself. He throws all his charming grounds open to the public, and has earned many a good word and blessing for his unselfishness. That wooded park is really the very perfection of sylvan scenery.

Sam's coach is always accompanied by his dog Spring. When Spring is tired he jumps up and rides in the "boot." Spring is half greyhound, half sheep-dog, and a wonderful dog he is; a famous poacher, only they don't call it poaching in these parts. Sam says he is personally known to and liked by Lord Cawdor, and he romps about the private grounds as if they were his own property. The rabbits had been driven in in the park by a preceding carriage, so he had no sport there, but, when we got out on the moors beyond, Spring was in his glory. There were rabbits galore, but so near their burrows that they popped in without giving him a chance. Soon he put up a fine hare, and gave her a glorious run for nearly half a mile across the moor. It was a stirring sight. The greyhound speed in Spring's composition was somewhat weighted by the sheep-dog part of him, but he kept equal pace, within four or five yards of the hare, for the whole distance, then, somehow, in the bushes pussy dodged him, and he came back rather ashamed

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THE HUNTER'S LEAP.

of himself and chagrined at his bad luck, but he was soon off again. He hunted for miles, but was not lucky enough to catch either bunny or pussy. In one field he put up a rabbit, and would have had a fine run, but a herd of splendid Castle Martin black cattle started after him full gallop, and poor Spring only escaped their fury by springing right over the hedge into the road. Spring's poaching proclivities and hairbreadth escapes from various disasters were a source of some anxiety and much amusement to all of us.

We soon reached the point of St. Govan. I counted the steps down to the curious little chapel, which is fixed in a cleft in the rocks as if it had drifted there from sea. I made the steps to be seventy-six, but in coming back I counted seventy-eight. The remarkable thing about these steps is that no one ever could count them; they always differ down and up, so that to this day no mortal can say, with absolute certainty, how many steps there are at St. Govan's. We passed "The Huntsman's Leap"—a terrific rift in the cliffs; the legend is that while coursing on the moors the horse took the leap at his full speed and cleared the chasm; but the rider died of fright when he got home. Sam told me that two or three years ago a foolish young fellow attempted the leap for a wager, and his mangled remains are still at the bottom of the abyss.

We proceeded to the wonderful Stack Rocks and the huge caldrons in front of them. The most interesting of these is called "The Devil's Punch Bowl." Here truly is a wild scene of which it is useless—indeed, it would be mere priggishness to

attempt to paint a picture in words which could adequately convey an idea of this very interesting scene.

The sea-gulls—which term covers a good variety of aquatic birds—are there in myriads. The eligug, or guillemot, lays only one egg, on the bare rock ; it is streaked and speckled on light blue ground, the size of a duck's. I captured one of these eggs, not, it must be owned, by any daring adventure of my own. I was not tied to a rope and let down the perpendicular side of the rocks a few hundred feet to find it ; I bought it from an old woman for three pennies. Here are to be seen, during the period of incubation, the waddling, idiotic-looking guillemot or eligug, perched on the top of some high point of rock, his beak in the air, as if he were listening to some distant music, the puffin, the razor-bill, and other varieties.

Many of the birds have done their nesting, and taken their departure to unknown regions, but thousands are there still. The guillemots are said to take to the open sea, where they remain days and nights. All will have cleared out in a week or two, and the grand old rocks will then be as silent and desolate, except from the roar and the sigh of the sea, as they are now alive with the monotonous though varied shrieks of the gulls.

The nests, if they can be called nests, of these various birds are all, more or less, on small inaccessible ledges, each family always maintaining its own position on the rocks, and, notwithstanding the many thousands of birds there are floating about, there seems never to be any confusion—every bird has his own particular perch.



THE HERRING-GULL'S NEST—ST. MARGARET'S ISLAND.

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What a pleasant, delightful, and novel scene one sees, lying on the velvet green grass on the rim of that awful abyss, and watching the beautiful birds floating about hundreds of feet down and all round, or dashing up to their nests and perches on the rocks, screaming and scolding, and sometimes pulling an unwilling young one off its perch, thus compelling it to spread its wings and float away with the rest.

It is said that they sometimes carry the young fledglings on their backs down to the sea, where they float about on the water, long before they can fly in the air.

I noticed a singular bird, which I took to be the stormy petrel, a bird altogether different in plumage and the shape of its wings from its neighbours, and it is much smaller ; it was impossible, however, from its great speed, to distinguish any special features. Instead of floating about like the gulls, its delight seemed to be to fly with rapid wing always more or less in the same circle, round and round, unceasingly, with the speed, whirr, and motion of a "swift." Its gyrations were amusing, because so totally different from its surroundings, and apparently so meaningless. One might have imagined that it had just come up from the sea, and had got amongst these thousands of gulls by chance, seeking its relations in vain.

Reluctantly we tore ourselves away from this enchanting scene, and mounted our chariot for the return journey.

It was five o'clock before we reached the Pembroke "Lion." Among other places that we passed was the beautiful mansion of Orielson, that romantic spot so



LETTER No. XIV.

MY HOLIDAY IN WALES.—NO. III.

Aug. 1.



ONDAY.—Bank Holiday was celebrated in Tenby by a great variety of entertainments.

Tenby possesses an old charter, the rights conveyed by which have been rigorously maintained for over 600 years. No mayor of Tenby has ever failed in his duty in maintaining the dignity of this old charter, by fulfilling its requirements that a free fair shall be held under the suburbs of its old walls—a kind of liberty hall or carnival—for buying and selling and merry-go-rounding by day and general rowdyism by night. Here the potteries are well represented, and you can buy all sorts of crockery and handsome chinaware at very low prices compared with other times.

The worshipful mayor and aldermen proceed in a body round the town, preceded by the town crier proclaiming the fair to be open, and then the fun begins.



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The mayor, to whom I had the pleasure of being introduced just before the procession started, has the reputation of being a real benefactor to the town, for which he has done much for its improvement, as well as for the little harbour, at his own personal cost, and consequently is very popular.

Our Bank Holiday at Tenby is kept in a decidedly festive fashion. Our town clerk has been good enough not only to leave instructions for my inspection of this old charter, and other ancient records (which, unfortunately, I was prevented from going to see), but he also lent us the key of a newly-discovered cavern, said to contain some really wonderful stalactites and geological examples.

We started to interview this wonderful cavern, a mile and a half from town. On our way we found ourselves in the midst of a happy crowd of people, all wending their way in the same direction. They were not going to our cave, but to a lovely green meadow on the top of the high land, where the Tenby Volunteer Fire Brigade sports were being held. We stepped into this field from the high road for half an hour, to witness the athletic youths of the town performing under the patronage and personal support of the mayor and aldermen, who took a warm interest in the sports, which were sufficiently varied. Foot races by young men, three-legged races, bicycle races, pony races, cross-country races, etc. It was a delightful day for the performances, which were highly amusing.

I could not stay long, being hurried away by my friendly philosopher, F. S. P. (of whose goodness I have already had occasion to speak). He, on scien-

tific investigation bent, carried me away from these frivolities, in which he perhaps thought I was taking too eager an interest, and hastened me away to the cave, which we found a little further along the road, well locked up, as such buried treasure should be—so well, indeed, that the key would not unlock the door, much to friend P.'s chagrin. We were obliged to abandon the hope of seeing this cavern of wonders.

We started on a pleasant two-miles' walk across the fields to a neighbouring wood to visit Hoyle's Cavern. We found it hidden away among overhanging trees and surrounding lush foliage. We entered the throat of this wide-open-mouthed monster in becoming attitude, with lighted candles, on hands and knees. We penetrated the bowels of the earth for a considerable distance, and returned quite satisfied with what we had seen. It was by no means necessary to pursue this rugged zig-zag journey its whole length to prove that it extends under the Ridgeway right along to Pembroke, ten miles away. In one's pursuit of knowledge it is desirable sometimes to take things for granted. I am willing to believe that the tunnel actually passes through to Pembroke. I have no desire to prove it by experiment.

From the mouth of the cavern we could see the sports going on in the fields on the opposite hill, a mile or two away. It was interesting to witness the cross-country race from this 'vantage ground. Four or five young fellows in various colours darting across the fields over hedges and ditches, down over the sand hills, up one side of the lime-kiln rocks, and down the

other side ; now on the turnpike road, and then across the green fields and home ; red far ahead, blue a good second, the rest nowhere.

Aug. 2.—A fine day, with occasional rain clouds hanging about, but no rain fell. A promising day for the Tave, and this was to be our day of days. My fair success a few weeks ago on the Itchen had not yet faded from my memory. I panted for “fresh woods and pastures new.”

We took train for Whitland. Here I found a lovely stream, which would bear comparison with the dear old Itchen in any part I have seen of it. It wanders through rich and fertile meadows from its source to the sea. It abounds with deep pools and slowly running roaches, the haunts of many a lordly salmon ; but we were in search of trout, with which undoubtedly the river abounds.

We were permitted, through the kindness of Mr. Beynon, of Trewerne, the owner of all the land hereabouts, to fish two miles or more of his private water, and, moreover, we were invited to luncheon at his beautiful mansion.

We commenced fishing up stream, intending to fish up to lunch time. I caught one nice trout soon, which inspired good hope. Soon after starting up river, we encountered a small, deep, running stream at right angles with our river, and flowing into it. This vexatious little stream, too deep to wade across, and too wide to leap over, pursued a tantalizing course, with no bridge to cross it, so far as we could find. We were compelled to give up the ante-prandial part of our programme, and take to the turnpike road and

to the carriage drive which led up to Trewerne. The hospitable master was there to meet us.

After a repast fitted for princes in disguise, on a tour in search of the beautiful, our host took us out to show us his charming grounds. Below the ample lawn in front of the house is a very pretty ornamental lake, covered here and there with water lilies.

Here we saw one of the prettiest sights I ever witnessed. A pair of moorhens had taken up their abode on this water, which they had come to regard as their own special domain ; and no other moorhens are permitted to come near them. They are as tame almost as the tamest villatic fowl, and frequently accompany the ducks to the feeding yard.

You know that this is usually a singularly shy bird, and I venture to think that few of my readers, intimately acquainted as they may fancy themselves to be with the habits of this familiar wild bird, have ever had the opportunity we had of watching its pretty motions so near at hand.

This pair of highly favoured birds had built themselves a nest on the top of a tuft of rushes quite in the open, and within a yard of the margin of the lake, fearing no enemies of dog or cat or biped of the unfeathered race. They had only just hatched, or rather they seemed to be just in the midst of hatching, a young brood of the prettiest, funniest, blackest little chicks that ever were seen.

They seemed to burst their shells, hop into the water, and float about with their mother as jauntily as if they knew all about it, and had been used for untold ages to float about on that lovely lake—and how proud of

them and happy was their mother ! There were four little black mites, that one after the other had crawled up the sides of the nest and launched themselves into a sea of unknown and uncared-for troubles. Not an insect, not a floating bit of food appeared on the surface of that water but mamma darted after it—not for herself, she was too proud of her chicks to think of herself,—every scrap she picked up she dropped by turns into the little wide-open, and expectant, pinky-red throats of her precious brood.

Meanwhile, her husband swam round and round in an ever narrowing circuit. Presently a little squeak is heard from the nest—another chick has escaped from its surrounding shell.

We were standing about ten yards away from it. The little fledgling was making vain efforts to mount the barricade, which had hitherto surrounded his little world, anxious, no doubt, like Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia, to scale the walls, and see the world beyond. Papa came sailing up at the young bird's call, and for a short time floated in front of the nest, and examined us with his bright and critical eye to see whether we were friends or foes. There he sat on the water like a painted bird upon a painted lake ; his lovely plumage glittering in the sun ; his bright red beak forming a pretty contrast to the glossy sheen of his back. At length he concluded that we were friends ; then he hopped upon the nest and cuddled his little charge with paternal solicitude. In addition to this youngest chick there was still another egg in the nest, but that was probably addle, and would remain an egg to the end of the chapter.

We bade adieu to our genial and hospitable host and hostess, and wended our way to the Tave. Friend P. throws the fly with admirable precision. He fished only occasionally with my rod. Alternately we fished our way back to the station, but no presentable fish could we catch, only a few small things, which we returned to their native element. The water was too low and too bright; the trout were not rising, or when they rose it was sluggishly and short, and only tipped our flies with their tails, treating us with aggravating contempt. Even when hooked, it was so slightly that they broke away before they could be entangled in the net. We discovered the little plank bridge hidden away under a clump of trees over the stream which had baffled our upward course, and so returned to the station.

Notwithstanding our failure, which, be it remembered, was not due to unskilful manœuvring (rather let it be attributed to any cause but that), I enjoyed that little outing wonderfully. The wind was north, the sky was lowering, promising rain which did not come. My solitary trout was the only result of our day's work, but I did not cry *perdidi diem*! We were in the midst of lovely scenery. On the other side of the river we heard the bell-like notes of a milkmaid's song, varied sometimes by the peculiar resonant call to the cows to come home to be milked. A vigorous young maid, full of life and health, pacing across the meadow with swinging stride, now singing, like another "sweet Maudlin," now calling up the lagging cows by their names. The lowing herd of thirty or more with teeming udders winding their way slowly "o'er the lea"

to the milking yard presented a pretty picture in the landscape.

We left this scene reluctantly, but we had to catch our train at 5.30, with the sad reflection that if we could but have waited for another hour or two we should have another tale to tell about the trout. Never mind; "hope springs eternal in the human breast": neither my holiday nor my record are over yet.

August 4.—Tenby being small, its treasures of interest are not inexhaustible. After a fortnight's residence in this "little England," as it is sometimes called, we became restless, and, like Rasselas and the moorchicks of the lake of Treverne, we sighed for a sight of other worlds.

We spent a pleasant week at Ilfracombe, during which we drove from Bideford by way of Westward Ho! to Clovelly.

Westward Ho! is comparatively a new watering place. It is not old enough to have given the name to Kingsley's celebrated novel—I presume the novel gave the name to the place.

Kingsley's "Westward Ho!" and Blackmore's "Lorna Doone" share the honour of being the most read and talked-about books in the West of England.

Clovelly is the oddest, queerest little place that ever was seen. It has been described a hundred times, and I am no hand at description. Truth to tell, there is not much enjoyment to be found in hobbling down those rickety old stone steps to the dirty little harbour at the foot of the hill, and up again. The donkeys do it best with sacks of coal on their backs.

But it can hardly be this odd little up-and-down village that attracts so many people to come hundreds of miles by land and sea to see.

It is Clovelly's surroundings that are so attractive. No carriage and pair, no horse and cart ever passed through that village.

Its wood-clad heights are its chief feature—we had to confine our attention to "The Hobby Drive," a lovely wood that crowns the heights for miles along the rock-bound coast.

Next day we made our way, by Sam Colwell's coach, to Lynton.

We had only one clear day there, and that was sufficient to convince us that the beauties of Lynton cannot be seen in many days. We explored "The Valley of Rocks" which hides "The Severn Sea"; we climbed "The Devil's Cheese Press," and from there we got a glorious sight of sea and land. We walked up the East Lynn Valley on a very hot day to where the East and West Lynn meet, and we said :

"There's not in the wide world a valley so sweet
As that vale in whose bosom the wild waters meet."

I have never seen the "sweet vale of Avoca" which inspired Moore's melody; but, in its way, our charming Lynn Valley and its "waters meet" can scarcely be less picturesque, or less deserving of a poet's raptures.

We regretfully left Lynton for Minehead on the coach, a lovely drive sometimes, but we were caught in a pitiless storm on Exmoor; the sun burst forth as we descended the hill to the pretty village of Porlock, of John Ridd and "Lorna Doone" fame. At Bristol

I parted with my two pleasant companions, who had hitherto shared and enhanced all my pleasures, and I made my solitary way to Hereford, and to my old quarters on the Wye.

August 13 to 17.—I spent a delightful time at the old farmhouse. I fished uselessly in the Wye, as I had done before; it is still as hopelessly poached as ever. The young salmon are taken out of the river in shoals, and by all kinds of improper methods. The plea is that they are delicious eating; everybody takes them and nobody interferes.

I daresay you remember Gus, and possibly you remember Fuss. Gus is still in the enjoyment of farm life, healthy and happy; but Fuss, I am sorry to say, has come to an untimely end. Deviating, as he sometimes would, from the strict paths of duty as a sheep-dog, he, one day whilst his master was fishing—an occupation Fuss continued to abominate—started off on a little hunting expedition on his own account, and was lost. His mortal remains were subsequently found stuck fast in a rabbit hole, into which, with his usual impetuosity, he had forced his head and shoulders without calculating how he should get them out again. There, alas! he died a sad and lingering death. He was on the whole a dog of excellent character, with only such small failings as this which led to his destruction. He was much bemoaned and lamented by his friend and master.

I must wind up the story of my holiday. I went on to Ludlow, where a young friend had got for me permission for a day's fishing in the Teme at Downton Castle, and another day on the Onny.

The Teme, where it passes through the lands of Downton Castle, is as picturesque and delightful as the Dove in Dovedale, and that is praise enough for any stream. We fished it on a fine afternoon from the bridge below the Castle, past the Castle through the wooded ravine, and up to the picturesque old mill, about three miles.

We caught between us nine brace of trout and grayling. My share in the enterprise was but small, for I could not, or rather I would not, wade, and wading amongst those rocky boulders is essential. You cannot get at the best pools in any other way. Wading is undoubtedly the best way to catch fish in streams like this, but I am quite of the same opinion as the "Ettrick Shepherd"—

"*Shepherd.* That's what a' you waders come to at last. Had it not been, Mr. North, for your plowgin' in a' the rivers and lochs o' Scotland, baith sea water and fresh, like a Newfoundland dog, or rather a seal or an otter, you need na' had that crutch aneath your oxter."

The next day, and my last for angling, we spent on the Onny, a bonny little river, very pleasant to roam by the side of, and very full of fish. On this occasion I caught seven trout and grayling, and my young friend caught eleven.

This is the end of my fishing and my holiday. Now for hard bricks and musty tomes.

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During our holiday we caught one hundred and ten well-fed trout and grayling—on our last day the Major had nine brace of splendid trout. * * * * *

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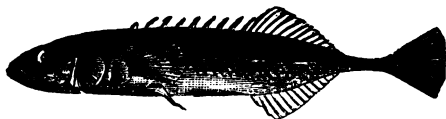
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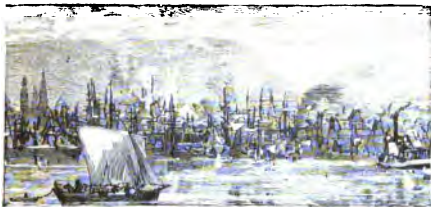
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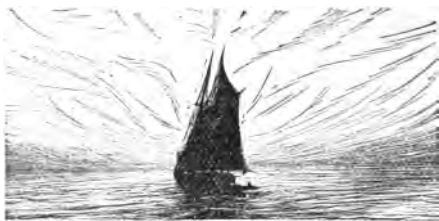
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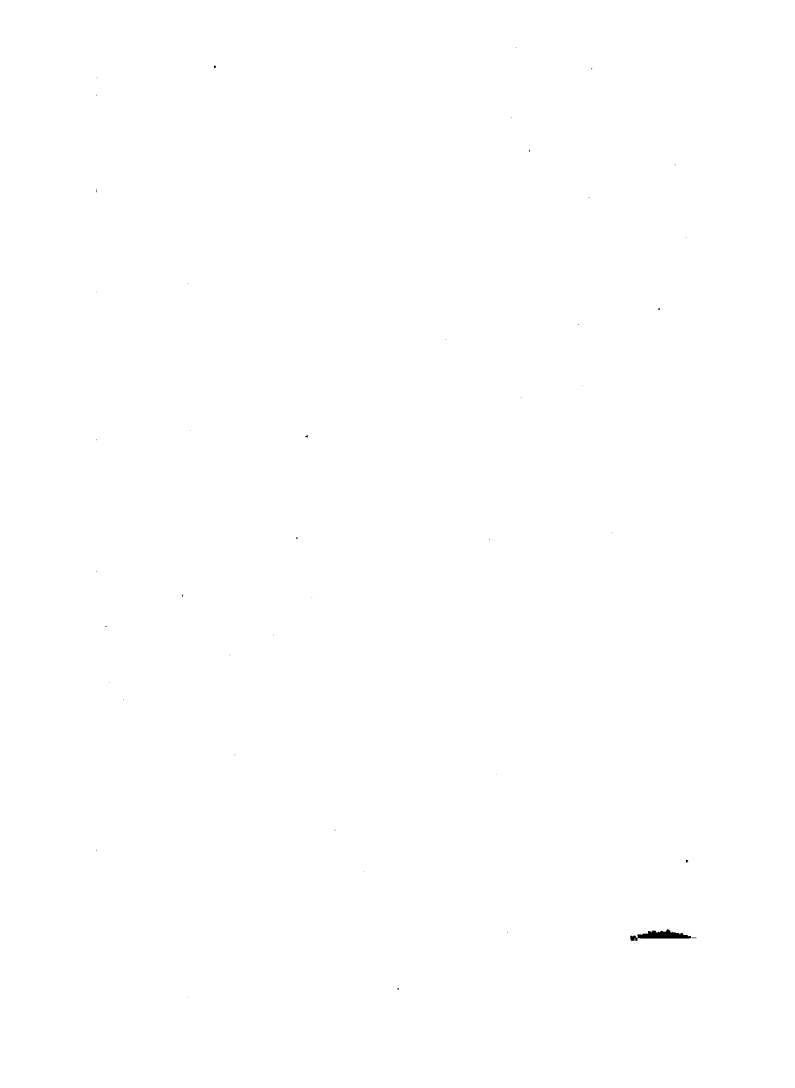
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